



# Lan's Lantern #43

## Contents

Cover: .....	Dale Maple
Tables of contents, artists; colophon.....	1
From the Editor: A New Look.....	Lan...2
Ruins and Glory: A Trip to Greece and Turkey.....	Ben P. Indick...3
Samanda b Juede for TAFF.....	Samanda b Juede...17
Eunuchs in Space: Sex in Zero-G.....	Dennis K Fischer...14
Rosabelle, Believe.....	Janeen S. Deboard...23
Crescent Moon.....	Anne Valley...27
Across the Wide Water: A Trip Report to Merry Old England... Elizabeth Ann Osborne...	28
It All Started With... A History of Electrical Eggs.....	Samanda b Juede...38
A Brief Filmography of Arthurian Films....	Mark R. Leeper...40
Christian Publishing SF/F.....	Maureen O'Brien...43
Tana Leaves.....	Mark R. Leeper...47
Collecting Manuscripts.....	David Creek...48
Travels with Dennis.....	Dennis Caswell...49
Cold.....	Mark R. Leeper...50
Quiglethorpe's Great Find.....	H.E. Mercier-Davis...51
Remembering Tomorrow #3 & #4.....	Samanda b Juede...52
My First Worldcon, or The Birth of a Hoax Bid.....	Laurel Winter...57
Fanzines.....	Lan...59
PULP and CELLULOID: Book, film & tape reviews by lots of people...	66
The Writer Meets His Editor in the Supermarket...	Lawrence Schimel...106
Conreports and Ramblings 43:	
February 1994 to January 1995...	Lan...107
The China Syndrome: A Trip Report.....	Susan Schwartz...144
In Lieu of a Lettercolumn.....	Letters from Readers...163
A List of Those Lan Heard From.....	164
Addresses of the Contributors.....	165

## Dedication

To Maia, as usual,  
and  
Samanda b Juede

LAN'S LANTERN #43 is published and edited by George "Lan" Laskowski, 1306 Cherokee, Royal Oak, MI 48067-3386 USA. Phone (810) 544-1161. LAN'S LANTERN is available for articles, art, letters of comment, even money (US\$5 post paid) and the whim of the editor. The opinions expressed are those of the contributors, and may or may not be those of the editor. This is Lantern Publication #29, a division of LanShack Press Unlimited. LAN'S LANTERN #43 is copyright (c) March, 1995, by George J Laskowski Jr., except where otherwise noted. Contributions (art, articles, reviews, letters) become the property of LanShack Press, but will be returned upon request. All rights return to the contributors upon publication. Business manager: Maia Cowan.

## TABLE OF ARTISTS

Sheryl Birkhead - 2
Robin Brunner - 21
Cathy Buburuz - 47, 51, 85, 101L, 165
P.L. Caruthers-Montgomery (Calligraphy) - 1, 59
Cat - 42, 44, 65, 96, 97R, 98, 99, 100, 103, 106B
Tom Ciesielski - 60, 67, 102
Colleen Doran - 106T
Ian Gunn - 56, 104
Beth Hansen - 48, 87
Linda Leach Hardy - 17, 27, 73
Terry Jeeves - 39, 70, 77, 80
Dale Maple - Cover, 62
Lore Ann Parent - 23, 26
Laurel Slate - 41
Diana Harlan Stein - 66, 69, 89, 97R, 105
Bill Ware - Back cover

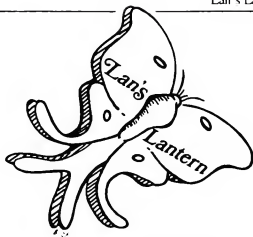
## Why You Are Receiving This

- Contribution (art, article, review, loc) in this issue
- Contribution (art, article, review) received, to be used in a future issue
- Comment or loc received (it may be published in a future issue)
- Trade — You wanted one
- We're in an apa together
- Mentioned in Letter Column
- Your book, zine, or tape is reviewed (see page 66 for index)
- Mentioned in my Conreports & Ramblings
- I thought you might find this interesting.
- This is your last issue unless you do something
- Please contribute to the Hal Clement and/or Bob Tucker Specials; Deadline: 1 June 95

From the Editor:

# A New Look

by Lan



In This Issue

Although I have been working on this issue for a while, it has only come together in the past few months. I've been playing around with MS Word and the Macintosh Classic computer that sits on my desk in my office at home, and I still don't have things right. I am still used to the old-fashioned "cut and paste" method of putting a fanzine together, so trying to keep in mind what it is supposed to look like, as opposed to what portions I see on the screen, is not always easy. With point size difference of the various fonts, it has been tricky to leave enough space for the illustrations. This problem was compounded when Maia used her laser printer to print off a clean copy as the master, and some of the fonts I was using were not in her computer. So you will notice some uneven breaks where the pictures and artwork are.

Then there are the spelling mistakes, which I thought I had taken care of. Apparently, I had neglected to run major sections through the spelling check program, so please forgive those mistakes, particularly if there were names misspelled. I hope to do a lot better next time.

Yes, the look is mostly new, and I will continue to improve on it. I learned a lot in putting this issue together, and am learning more every time I use MS Word for writing my apazines, and now this. I hope everyone is patient as this process continues over the next few years, when I will probably be forced to learn an actual desk-top publishing program. However, if you want a comparison of what I did before and what I am currently doing, the "Fanzine" review section (page 59) is done in the old "Gothic 15" typeface I was using before, printed off on a Silver Reed daisy-wheel printer. I think the new look is better.

Samanda b Jeudé for TAFF

I am sure you have at least scanned the table of contents, and saw the number of travelogues this time. It appears *Lan's Lantern* has become a place for fans to send their trip reports. Not that I am complaining. Ben's travelogues are well written and the pictures he's supplied to go with them pushed me to include some in my "Conreports and Ramblings". And Ben's description of his trip to Greece and Turkey are well done and informative.

The other travelogues are just as good and interesting. Dennis Caswell and his trips to various conventions (page 49), Elizabeth Osborne and her travels to England, Susan Schwartz to Taiwan ("The China Syndrome", page 144), and Laurel Winter's first Worldcon excursion (page 57), all contain some sense of wonder, humor, and delight. Then there are nine travels as well, which people seem to find interesting too.

Other things of note are the articles by Mark R. Leeper, who, I think, is a wonderful humorist, and Samanda Jeudé, who is running for TAFF. I support Samanda for this race, and I've included a TAFF voting ballot for everyone to use. Read her stuff: she's good. And Janeen DeBoard's short story is the **Context** contest winner this time around. I think you will enjoy "Rosabelle, Believe" (page 23) with illustrations by Lore Ann Parent.

And there are also the assorted articles that actually deal with SF.

I am still collecting material on Hal Clement and Wilson "Bob" Tucker: the deadline is now firm at 1 June 95.

The Next issue will have the rest of Elizabeth Osborne's England trip, reviews, articles, the return of a full letter column, more of my ramblings and the usual sort of things. See you then. [✉]



# Ruins and Glory:

## A Trip to Greece and Turkey

by Ben P. Indick

### Preface: Trips, why Bother?

A peculiarity of mine about trips is that I enjoy planning them, but once I have put my bank account into shock for them, I am fretful and unhappy that I did it. My wife Janet has learned to ignore me because once I am in the airport I begin to cheer up, and when we are seated on the plane it is my moment of epiphany. I sit back and I am ready! Off we go -- to adventure! Come on along, please, for we have a grand time planned, seeing some of the legendary ancient sites in Greece, then a cruise among some of the gorgeous Greek Islands in the Aegean Sea, and finally a brief tour of Turkey, from its ruins to its lively and legendary city of Istanbul! Three vacations! Even I can't wait!

### Athens

Two years ago we chose between Greece or Egypt and decided on Egypt. Last year we put off Greece again and chose a trip to Spain. This year, however, we decided to visit the birthplace of democracy and the legends which have haunted my imagination since childhood. Off we flew to Greece and to its capital city, home of the fabled Parthenon. Athens is relatively small, less than three million people, and probably just as many cars and motorcycles. They drive fast, unceasingly and pollutingly, like Mexico City, Athens in within a bowl of mountains and it retains the noxious fumes, and the nearby sea hardly helps relieve it. We stayed in the center of town at the best hotel, the Grande Bretagne, older but restored and busy. Cabs lined up three deep, and sometimes head-in between parked cabs. After our customary change of room to gain my wife a room with two beds, a luxury she loves in hoteling, we settled into a large room with a small terrace and a great view.

Across the way was the Parliament, with its patrol in front by two toy soldiers (known as "Ev-zones"), whom we would later observe closely in Changing of the Guard ceremonies, a surefire tourist attraction in any city. They were helpless photo-

mates for tourists also, as they stood in stone-still attention before their toy guardhouses. They wore traditional Greek garb, colorful jacket, beret, short skirt over white tights and tasseled shoes with heavy soles, the better to clump loudly when their clockwork mechanism activated them into broken-kneed peculiarly delayed goose-step marches. Another view from our window displayed a mountain on the other side of town, with monastery and a public restaurant, access to which was by funicular elevator. I am told it was not bad.

Around the plaza in front were familiar names: *Wendy's*, *McDonald's*, *Pizza Hut*, and a new *Kenny Rogers Roasters*, which had a long line in front of it. All were busy. We discovered a Greek fast-food place, *Neon*, and delighted in its spinach pies, cheese pies, moussaka, baklava, etc., all of which, old favor-ites of ours anyway, we would enjoy throughout the trip at hotels and midday restaurant stops. We walked to a large park we had passed busing in, which had a gracious series of ancient columns within, as well as a high, double-tiered arching gate. The latter, Hadrian's Gate, had been erected by Roman conquerors, and the columns were all that remained of an ancient Grecian temple to Zeus. We also discovered that Siesta, a midafternoon time when the stores mostly close down (and stay open late at night) applied to these ruins as well. The Gate was locked and we could only look through the fence. From here we could see, a mile away, a hill atop which was the Acropolis. The top of every large hill is called an acropolis, and some have temples on them, but none as famous or important as that of Athens. A few have castles, erected by Crusaders and Venetians.

Dinner at the hotel was fine and afterwards found a bookshop where I sang "Over the Rainbow" and managed to get a Greek-language version of *The Wizard of Oz* for my kids, something I have done in other countries as well. I bought a Greek language Stephen King too, but this was not hard at all. *Everybody* reads Stephen King! Yes, I found him in Turkey too.

The next day the tour commenced, with a trip-around Athens, proving that the beauty and harmony



The Parthenon on the Acropolis in Athens, Greece.

the ancient Greeks had achieved had been lost of the centuries. It is a town of dull flat buildings four to six stories high, lacking any style or beauty. Its "class" shopping area is likewise undistinguished, but a broad area of small shops, churches and tavernas, the Plaka, has life and color at least, as well as a large and beautiful cathedral with mosaics on a square of handsome paving blocks. The Plaka is below the Acropolis, which we toured in the afternoon and that evening Janet and I walked there after we had returned to the hotel, to have a nice Greek dinner in a "taverna" under the stars, the classic temples illuminated high above us, while she sipped a Diet Coke and I had a beer. It was romantic.

### The Acropolis

We had spent much of the afternoon at the Acropolis, bused most of the way up. It is an oblong hill, flat on top, a perfect site for a religious area, remote from the populace yet accessible. Its major temple, the Parthenon, originally devoted to Athena, is even in its state of disrepair one of the world's most famous buildings. Visitors can no longer walk through it. Small temples and an amphitheater come before it, and opposite it is the handsome Eryctheum, with caryatids, superbly graceful female sculptures as supporting columns. (These are replicas; the originals are housed nearby in a museum.) The

irony of the Parthenon is that it stood in excellent condition for some two millennia until occupying Ottoman Turk forces used it as a powder storage house and opposing French planted a shell within this. An earthquake damaged it further, and later the English Lord Elgin, ostensibly to save the magnificent frieze of bas-relief sculptures at the pediment, removed them and brought them to England, where we saw them. The Greek government is fighting to regain them, although they can hardly be replaced on the shattered Parthenon. The British keep promising to consider and as promptly forget it.

Why does this building haunt the mind? A few replicated sculptures flit here and there over the pedimental triangle and frieze to remind us that in its pristine state those stolen marbles would have made it not only art of the highest accomplishment, but would have represented in lifelike terms the legends of gods and men. It stands now, some columns gaping at their summits, others crumbled and broken, restored to a semblance of themselves, the noble roof and interior (and the legendary statue of Athena by Phidias) gone. Restoring it in imagination, one still believes perfection is attainable and this is its hope and its glory. It remains even now what it was in so imperfect a world, the possibility of what could be. It denies its very mass by brilliant illusion, magically achieving a superb unity of its elements through physical trickery, columns which

lean in from the outside, a floor higher in its center, all so that the eye looks at it and sees total perfection. This is the Greek ideal, calm, serene stasis in the universe. Perhaps, like the classic Greek drama, where Gods tricked mankind and punished it for its *hubris*, thinking it could stand up to the universe, the Parthenon had to die too, to demonstrate its human origins. Yet, attempting to understand the dream of unknown ancient architects we come halfway around the world to pay respect to a beloved site and the daring of its creators, to understand its fate and finally to acknowledge who we are.

I jotted down the foregoing as I studied it. Forgive me if the rhetoric is florid. Grecian ruins are more humble than the forbidding colossi of Egypt, but their gods are human, and they share their lives and the remains of their elegant and nobly designed temples with us. Athens is otherwise not memorable, although we did see the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, solemnly patrolled by more Toy Soldiers, the Royal Palace and the Olympic Stadium, site of the first modern Olympics. Later we would visit the *original* one. Most tours offer little political discussion. The country is a modified socialist state run by an old American bane, Andreas Papandreou, and financially weak.

## Money

American money goes far here. The *drachma* is the unit of exchange, about 240 to the dollar. In the afternoon we decided to visit the Museum of Archaeology which has a good collection housed in an inadequate building always under repair. We were told the cab should be about 500 drachmas. Cabs are an adventure. They will stop en route to pick up extra passengers, if they are going their way and if they feel like it. One must run into the traffic, avoiding cars and bikes, and try desperately to convince the "no"-shaking driver to accommodate him. We finally learned to be in the right direction; even then we needed a passenger to beg the driver, that it would not be far out of the way. The Museum had some splendid sculptures and gold from Mycenae, and when we left a cabbie was sitting outside. He hailed us. I asked how much to the Grande Bretagne. "5000 drach-mas," he responded. "Forget it!" I snapped, walked across the street and got one for 400. He dropped us a block away and told us we could walk the block!

## The Peloponnese: Poseidon's Realm

A great land mass almost 20% of the total

Greek area, the Peloponnese Peninsula hugs the Grecian coast up to the north, extending into the Ionian Sea. Were it an island, shipping would be unconcerned, but it is attached by a minuscule isthmus at Corinth to the mainland. Even in Nero's time a canal was attempted, to cut across this neck and facilitate shipping to the north. The French accomplished the canal in 1893, a spectacular four mile arrow cut with sheer walls up to 170 feet. Unfortunately, their foresight was limited and the canal so narrow that its use is limited to smaller vessels and cruise ships today. Like so much of Greece, Corinth has lovely ruins and an Acropolis; however, time was limited and we had to pass them by. Not too far from where we watched a boat threading the narrow canal, Saint Paul, 2000 years ago, disembarked, moved to Corinth, wrote his famous letters and continued on elsewhere with his proselytization. We also continued on. There would be ruins enough.

We drove along steep mountain roads and swaybacks, dipping at times down to and then up from the sea. The expanse of ocean blazed in the bright sun below us, a dazzlingly rich blue, enhanced occasionally by white sails or a steamship. Small grey and green islands, of the several thousand which dot the Ionean and Aegean Seas, sparkled below. Fields of olive trees and pines bordered this coastal road. It was for me a scene of total fantasy. I even remembered it, painted in these same lustrous colors, glorying on the walls of the otherwise drab living room of my long-gone friend, Hannes Bok, forty years ago. Inspired by Maxfield Parrish, he allowed his imagination to roam where he himself never would. We drove by bays and coves of unimaginable beauty and I looked in vain for the white horses of the Sea-God to charge up with the foam.

We stopped at Epidaurus, home a few millennia ago to Asclepius and more recently to a legendary concert by the late Maria Callas. The diva sang in the superbly built 14,000 seat amphitheater on a hill, which had before it a huge downhill bowl. The acoustics were and remain fantastic, and it is said the natural amplification was so good she could be heard a half mile away. This is not unusual; the Brooklyn/Greek girl could always be heard a half a mile off and probably even further when Aristotle Onassis jilted her for Jacqueline Kennedy. The theatre remains in good condition. We saw the circular stage area in the center of the hemispheric theatre, and learned that the proscenium, today a border around the stage, was originally a backdrop on which scenery could be hung. We would see many



The Columns of Olympus

such amphitheatres, here and in Grecian Turkey. Obviously the Greeks liked a good show. I regretted we could see no actual plays in Greece, but I have seen *The Trojan Women* of Euripides in New York directed by Michael Cacoyannis and again by Andrei Sorban, and others as well. Since an ancient bill consisted of comedy as well as drama, one of the light-hearted satires of Aristophanes might have accompanied it.

Along these highways we saw numerous small "shrines", built by grieving or grateful survivors or relatives of victims of automobile accidents. Usually they are no larger than and resembling a rural mail box, often with a glass door and a religious object within. A small cross is generally over its small peaked roof. No one but, perhaps, the immediate family ever prays at them. We drove to sea level and the enchanting little town of Nauplion (also spelled Nauplia) on a bay. From a characteristic town square with a drowsy church it spread through small roads and lanes, and on the second floor balconies of the crowded houses grew a profusion of bougainvillea, the branches and bright red flowers hanging over the rails into the street. In the bay stood a jewel-like ship of stone, a small 15th century fortress, built by the conquering but long-since gone Venetians, and on a neighboring mountain the Venetians' Castle of Palomides. Our hotel, a half mile from the bay, had a pool without water, and the nerve to use in its advertising brochure a

photo of the bay with the stone fortress and a pool in the foreground of the photo which belonged to a different hotel!

### Mycenae: Agamemnon's City

Nearby is the city of Mycenae, one of the starting sites of the Trojan War. Here ruled Agamemnon, called to lead the Grecian forces against Troy by his brother Menelaus, whose wife Helen had been abducted by Paris, a Trojan prince. We shall hear more of the king when he went to Delphi for oracular advice. The tragedy would be completed a decade later when he returned to Mycenae, to be murdered by his wife Clytemnestra and her lover Aegisthus. The horror is compounded by the revenge of their children Orestes and Electra, who assassinated Aegisthus and their mother.

Mycenae was excavated by Schliemann after he had uncovered Troy, which will be visited later. There is an acropolis, storage rooms, tombs, all in ruins, plus a handsome Lion Gate with decorated lintel. Not far is a tomb of a Mycenaean ruler, possibly King Atreus, carved within a hill into a beehive shape, gloomy but fascinating, and although earthquakes crumbled it, the tomb has been restored and is capable of supporting its own weight without support. We had seen gold jewelry and plates discovered at Mycenae in the National Museum at Athens.

From Nauplia we climbed a mountain range, viewing other peaks, wreathed in mist, across the bay, to reach Olympia, site of the first Olympics. The ruins here are not of marble but of limestone now pitted and gracefully aged. This was never a city, just a temple and Olympic site and older than the Parthenon. It is not to be confused with Mount Olympus, home of the gods. Phidias is said to have had a great statue here, an "ancient wonder", one of some 7000 statues, none of which remains. There is a gracious quality to the worn blocks and cylinders of fluted stone, gray and pitted as one would expect of the soft stone. The stadium is wholly lost except for a handful of ground blocks, but it once held 45,000 spectators. A starting line of

stone remains, and the "sacred way" which the athletes trod. Winning athletes usually left behind inscribed marble stones telling of their exploits. Being in the Olympic games was among the highest honors an individual might achieve, so the fate of cheaters was less glorious: they had to erect stones detailing their acts and including names of family members as well. Some of each remain. Cheating was forever.

We lunched at a large roadside restaurant and returned there from our hotel that evening for a Grecian folk dance festival on a stage erected in the patio. The waiters and waitresses were colorfully dressed and attractive, and although amateurish the dancers kept a tradition alive. The *ouza*, an anise



The Shrine of Delphi

flavored liqueur which is a Greek national drink, was delicious. We preferred it straight, but the Greeks drop in an ice cube which turns the clear syrupy liquid a milky-white and dilutes the flavor. The audience, myself included, was invited on stage, to prove we were without question American tourists. The show concluded, inevitably, with the great Mikos Theodorakis title song from the film *Zorba the Greek* which, thirty years ago, made Greeks of us all.

Delphi would be our next goal, but first we made a stop at a beautiful Byzantine church at Pat-

ros--St. Andrews Church--whose X-shaped crucifix is named for the church. We traveled along the coast of the Sea of Corinth, passing many harbors protected by battle-mented sea walls, seeing a fairy-land of small islands sparkling in the blue water, lovely resorts, humble vil-lages, the sites of the Battle of Lepanto, where in the 16th century Venetian sea power destroyed a Turkish fleet and Cervantes lost the use of a hand. Then a ferry, and we left behind the beautiful Peloponnese. We crossed to the mainland, en route to the home of the Oracle, a high point of the tour, one which did not disappoint us.

More than halfway up the 7000 foot Mount Parnassus is Delphi. Mountains with great vistas abound here, and great fields of olive trees, with beautiful orange-colored bushes we would frequently see growing wild on the mountainsides, interspersed with bright red poppy flowers. There are stately ruins here, columns of marble sometimes softly glowing lightly with red or browns. A Treasury has been restored, and the plazas with their symmetrical rows of columns still speak to us, even if the Sibil and Apollo do not. The prophetess spoke gibberish anyway, one which priests would have to translate to the supplicant. Here Agamemnon was told he must sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia if her wished the gods to send a breeze to his boats, becalmed on their journey to Troy. We would require nothing as drastic, although we had a close shave.

Dependent upon tourism, a village, Arabova, clings to the mountainside. Many small houses line its few streets. Sheep graze on the hillside, and kilims, small unlined rugs, are made from their wool and sold in the shops. We left, descended the steep mountain, drove about ten minutes and came to an in-glorious halt. The brakes had gone! We looked back at the hill and breathed a sigh of relief. We hitched a ride with a companion tour bus until a replacement reached us, and then we were off to the Port of Piraeus and our cruise of the Greek islands.

### Jewels

Our ship, the **Olympic**, Epirotiki Lines, was newly new and was a delight. Our main deck stateroom was, as I specified, outside, with a picture window, not a porthole, two full size beds and shower. Decor everywhere was lovely. There was a splendid dining room and the food was fine, served either there or on deck at the pool in a copious buffet. We had hardly settled in before we were given *ouza* and a huge buffet. The pool itself had ice cold salt water, and we loved it. There was, typical of cruises, plenty of food including a midnight buffet, and also nightly music entertainment, plus a gambling salon.

The water was calm and the ship generally traveled at night and docked at an island during the day. We visited four of the major and most interesting islands. At Mykonos, the port is too shallow for large vessels, so the ship anchored and we came in by tender. We found a colony of white-washed houses a-round very small lanes, whose round paving slates are always lined with whitewash as well, so that everything but the air is painted. There

are also hundreds of very tiny white churches, often with color-painted domes, labeled "cycladean" for the simplicity of their shapes, all rounded, no edges. One thing each tourist island has (and there is little else to do on these islands) is a shopping area replete with jewelry shops, hence the subtitle above. Janet has always liked LALAOUNIS, a famous Greek jewelry designer. We priced a superb choker of 24 and 18K gold. It was millions of drachmas but came out to \$7000. This would have been half the NYC price, but no tax. (Duty, yes.) Happily for my bankroll, she decided against it. "Where would I wear it in New York?" she asked. Mykonos is also famous for its windmills, a row of six in one area.

The city is built on a hill, with stairs from one lane to another, an arduous climb, but so pretty, until the top where Reality returned: A big street with trucks, cars and motorbikes! That begins the rest of the island. We scurried back down to the little houses, their trellises overhung with red bougainvillea and other flowers, as well as birdcages, each with a twittering canary. The city has a beach within a half-moon bay in which the surf pounds against one side lined by a row of ancient houses shored up against the sea. Restaurants overhang the sea while the fronts consist of more shops! It is a gem, a Fantasyland, not real life at all. We returned at last to the ship (it was an adventure for Janet to climb the gangway from the tender to the deck). The glitzy, Vegas-type show that night featured a group of pretty stewardesses dancing and singing and its amateurish enthusiasm was actually endearing. The next night, however, "Greek Night", was good because a professional bouzouki player (a Greek guitar with a barrel belly) was brought on. We only had three nights aboard because I had chosen an Turkey extension, whereas most of our companions were content with the Greek trip alone. It should still have been four and we later received a refund. I wish I could have had the extra night, however. It's not the worst way to live.

There may be occasional rainy days but we had none, and one the next we visited Crete and the ancient city of Herclion with the nearby Palace of King Minos at Knossos. This is the site of the legendary Labyrinth, where Theseus fought the Minotaur, saving the virgins and young men sent as sacrifices. Much of the palace has been excavated, revealing a rather well-preserved and extensive several-storey flat structure, whose columns are often attractively colored and taper out toward their crowns. While no labyrinth or maze has been found, the





The Palace of Minos at Knossos.

profusion of rather small square rooms, many bearing still beautiful murals, some portraying dolphins, others of abstract design, can be seen as giving rise to the legend, especially since it was a custom to conduct Olympic games against a bull. A characteristic theatre remains and there is a museum displaying some splendid objects found in the ruins.

We reboarded and sailed to the remarkable island of Santorini. Seen from the sea, a towering cliff (1000 feet) stretching along a sickle-shaped rim of the island appears to be snow-covered. It is actually an expanse of tightly packed white-washed houses and churches, the city of Thira (or Fira), spread across the rim. The island has several accompanying small rocky islands, forming a general circular shape, and it all is actually the crater (*caldera*) remaining from an ancient and colossal volcanic eruption in 1500 BC. Some believe these islands represent the remains of Atlantis. It is a romantic conceit but no proof exists.

Our tender took us to the base of the cliff where a bus carried us up via a narrow road in a series of sharp swaybacks. It was rather hair-raising, except for the experienced and smiling driver, inasmuch as other vehicles and bicycles were trying to come down. Somehow everyone made it. From the summit we bused to the recently discovered ruins of a town buried under volcanic ash, Akrotiri. This is considered a Minoan city, similar to the culture on Crete. Under a shed roof (which made the inside

temperature soar over 100) we walked through the remains, small streets and shells of rooms, now under excavation. We could see large pots and even bulls horn sculptures akin to some we saw at Knossos. All details on walls and floors is gone (what was found is now in a museum), the rest sandpapered away by two millen-nia of volcanic pumice burying the entire site. No human remains have been found.

We too were not unhappy to escape the heat and fled back by bus across wide fields, many cultivating grapes and olives, to Thira, the attractive houses, lanes, cycladic churches and the inevitable but not un-welcome street of jewelry shops. We returned to our tender at sea level via a funicular, four-car six-passenger trains rising and descending at a 45 degree angle or worse. The pool on the ship was never more welcome!

We sailed to our final island destination, the major island of Rhodes (meaning "roses"). It is one of the Dodecanese group. We would miss such islands as Patmos, home of the famous monastery, and in the northeast Aegean, Samothrace, the source of the magnificent statue of the "Winged Victory" which graces the Louvre, and Lesbos, home of the poet Sappho. Well east of Rhodes is another large island we would miss, Cyprus, predominately Greek, but with a large Turkish population, long a bone of contention between the fractious nations and now divided into sectors. There is no love lost



Santorini Island. City atop cliff.; The ship Olympic docked with tender in foreground. between Greece and Turkey, and when Greece tried over a decade ago to slip a plebiscite by which would make the island wholly Greek, the Turks sent in an army. The UN managed an armistice which continues and the island is peaceful.

Rhodes is very close to Asia Minor but the indigenous population is mostly Greek and 2% Moslem. It is large and we bused 40 miles to Lindos, amused by a guide who was more candid than most about politics, taxes and tax evasion, and also about the nature of the handsome ancient columns we would see here and there as we drove, many, he pointed out, being fakes, reconstructed from ancient materials by Italians who thought they would look nice within parks and other sites. Ancient marble pieces, he pointed out, often popped up when people dug excavations for new homes; they were faced with telling the authorities and losing the land as historical area, or quietly reburying the pieces and finishing the construction.

Lindos is a small town built around a mountainous site above a most beautiful bay. It is a harmonious and lovely combination of ancient Greek, medieval and Byzantine. A Venetian crenelated fortress tops the hill, and may be reached via a labyrinth of endlessly twisting pathways and lanes, by foot or by donkey. We walked with care, as the same lanes are used by the donkeys. There are shops galore, but its unique charm is its doorways of crowded homes, continuous except for the lanes. The often

massive doors are often heavily carved and placed between ornate frames, once belonging to wealthy sea merchants. Here and there, beyond the gates we spied delightful grottoes, patios with gorgeous flowers, old furniture and garden sculpture. And always, along the twisting paths, views of the green bay beneath, with small rocky islands within it. Meanwhile, below, a mass of automobiles, motorcycles and buses waited to get into the limited parking lot at its base.

We drove back to Rhodes city and toured it. In the distance across the sea was Asia Minor. Homeowners leave rods of steel protruding from reinforced concrete structures, in case they wish to add storeys. Families often live together this way. The square nature of the buildings is relieved by flowers frequently hung from balconies. At the port and directly opposite our ship was an immense medieval Venetian fortress and town (greatly reconstructed). Catapult balls lie outside its walls and a dry moat of a hundred feet between them. It was, a millennium ago, home to the Knights Templar, a way station on the road to the Holy Land and played a major role in the story of the Crusades. Today it is home to hundreds of shops and a large population living within its old stone walls and spaces. A Jewish quarter had once existed here as well, its character gone now, although the name remained. I learned there was an abandoned synagogue somewhere within. After our tour I invited Janet back with me



to uncover it. She preferred the pool to the 100 degree exploration. She recalled a similar expedition a year ago in equally hot Seville!

It was not easy but I found it. A tourist police office supplied a schematic map, but knew nothing. Road markers were confusing; each side of an intersection would have the same street name, if it had signs at all, on both sides of the building. I nodded to an old woman sitting on the stoop of a crumbled structure, and she smiled back. She was dressed in black, as per the custom of widows, to wear black unless they remarried, for their whole lives. "JOOSH? JOOSH?" I asked, pointing at the map. She brought me to her family, young people at lunch in their home, the corner of a stretch of ancient stone. A young woman came out and graciously pointed toward a lane. I trudged on. I found the street I wanted, *Pericleus* (sic) and nearby was *Pythagorus* and *Socratus* (sic) as on the map. I walked up and down past shattered walls and broken archways until I chanced to look up, over the rotted remains of an old door and its mouldering transom.

There was a marble plaque, about 4 feet by 2 feet with English (not Cyrillic) characters on one half and Hebrew on the other. The date 1915 was there with a description and names of founders much as on any American synagogue. I pushed the protesting door open. Beyond the crumbling wall was -- nothing. No interior whatever, just some sheets on a clothesline belonging to the worn old

house beyond. Was there an even older remains of a synagogue? Might it have been here once, when a hopeful group of men founded this one? I had no way of knowing. Who destroyed the Jewish community here, leaving only the names and a wall of a shell? Who destroyed the vibrant Salonika community too, which we did not visit? The Nazis? The Fascists? One or both, no doubt, but not these people, not the Greek community, which never turned on its Jews. It was gone, and such Jews as survived had likely emigrated to Israel. 1915 was less than a century ago, but the ghost remaining was poignant. Some of my tourmates, a lovely American couple originally from Frankfort, Germany, happened to come by. "Did you find it?" they asked, knowing my objective. I took them and they stared silently. We all felt a sense of triumph that even a ghost of it survived, outliving its persecutors. I have the photo they took of me in front of it.

## Turkey

We sailed to Kusadasi, in the Asia Minor part of Turkey. We would only see some of its western part, busing toward the magnificent ancient city of Ephesus. Turkey is an Islamic country, although very secular, with many ancient Grecian ruins and also sites of Christian interest. The Turk is a romantic notion to Americans, who think of him as a fierce warrior, which he is, dressed in silken blouse and pantaloons, with a drooping and bushy mus-

Home of the  
Virgin Mary,  
Turkey



tache, and wielding a scimitar. It is far from the truth. The Turkish people, we would learn, are friendly and extremely hospitable, and the children, busloads of whom we would encounter, are adorable.

We made a brief stop at a lovely stone cottage with an altar within, known as the House of the Virgin Mary, where she is reputed to have lived and died, cared for by John at the behest of the dying Christ. Numerous signs urge the visitors to return for Christ's 2000th anniversary, the date being August 15th. The branches of trees on the path are filled with bits of knotted cloth, left by visitors.

Ephesus is extensively excavated, with so many columns, paths and structures it is referred to as "the city of marble". The main thoroughfare had shops along it, and their delineating walls are evident in the ruins; mosaic paths running in front of them remain in remarkable original condition. The remains of a brothel owned by a lady named Scholastica are discernible, with areas for bathing, dining and entertainment. Nearby is a marble bench which was obviously a toilet, with openings for the necessary functions. It was better than many of the road accommodations Janet had to face, where the sole facility (for which one invariably had to pay a small tip to a seated custodian, usually male) were slit trenches surrounded by stone slabs with places to rest her feet while squatting! One had to bring

one's own tissue too. Scholastica surely did better than that a few millennia ago, although she had few female customers. One handsome building of several storeys was a library, and a 24,000 seat theatre is still a fine reminder of the cultural life into which, unfortunately, women were not permitted. The itinerant Paul preached here as well, to local Jews, while pagan cults who derived in-come making and selling idols noted against him.

We stopped briefly at the Basilica of St. John, mostly in ruins now. Its namesake was buried here, but his bones were removed as relics by Crusaders, and exist in plentiful profusion around the continent. It is said that his head has likewise multiplied and is to be found in several churches. We returned to Kusadasi for a night at the excellent Fantasia Hotel, which offered a large swimming pool, and, later, fine food.

A lengthy busride along the Aegean brought us to Izmir (Smyrna), a major and industrialized town, with primarily dull multiple family buildings, as might be expected in a country with high inflation. We made a fascinating stop outside at a major rug-making factory. The area is rich in sheep, which furnish the wool for this manufacture. This was far more than a tourist trap, for we were shown the vegetable sources of the dyes (all but one, Cochineal, which comes from the bodies of a particular insect), and the huge pots in which they were cooking; wo-

At Ephesus, a latrine—for viewing only; it has not been used in 2000 years.



men worked at looms, and showed us how they made the knots, the number of which determined the value of the rug (or any Turkish or Oriental rug) and a showroom with numerous rugs unrolled one over the other as exhibition, and, of course, sale. In the Islamic tradition we were treated as guests and offered any beverage of our choice and tasty sandwiches and yogurt. Their yogurt is of a heavier consistency than ours, of excellent taste and served at all meals. Another tourist stop, less successful, was a "jewelry factory", some people doing silver soldering, but mostly it was a jewelry store. A different day we stopped at a ceramics factory; some work was being done but sales were what counted. Some tourists enjoy these purchasing opportunities, so they must be tolerated.

We continued on to historical sites, the Hospital of Asklepiion and the ruins of Pergamon overlooking them. The former, a mental hospital, had a sacred spring, but it did nothing to heal my knees, which I had bashed in a fall at a hotel in Greece. This is a tour habit of mine, and I have fallen while climbing a pyramid in Mexico, and on the cobblestones of Amsterdam. Probably others too! Pergamon has rows of tall and extremely graceful white marble columns, part of lost temples built by Hadrian and Trajan. A famous and very sound altar was removed to Germany from here, with claims there were given the rights; the Turkish government has found documents in the Palace of Topkapi contradicting this and seeks it back. Pergamon is high on

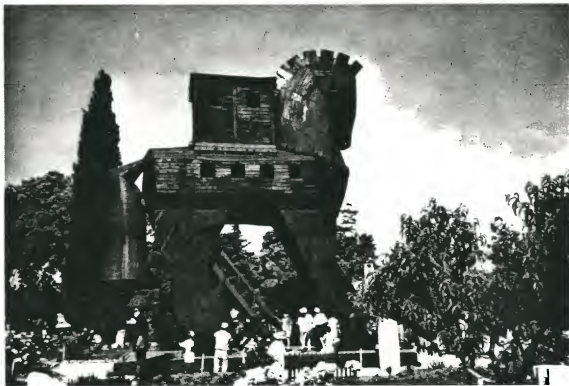
a hill; and aqueduct is below as well as a remarkably Egyptian temple to Serapion below. One temple is built directly into a hill.

We drove north along the sea. The seacoast has not been developed as well as similar Greek areas, and although attractive, and sometimes reaching fair heights, the beauty of the Peloponnese coast is well beyond this. There were many islands in the sea as we drove. The Turks are quietly bitter about the islands in general. During World War I the Ottomans made the error of siding with the Germans, believing they would win. In consequence, after the war, they were stripped of most of the old empire, including Syria, Palestine, Egypt, etc. and all but a very few inconsequential islands. We drove to Canakkale, a modest seacoast town, lively at night with families walking back and forth on its stone boardwalk, which was dotted with refreshment stands. The next day we would visit the site of one of the greatest epic romances of literature.

## TROY

We have grown up loving the story of Paris, tempted by the goddesses, who spirited off the beautiful Helen, wife to King Menelaus, to Troy, and of the decade-long war which the king fought to regain his wife, decided at last by the guile of Ulysses and his Wooden Horse. Over a century ago a successful young German businessman dreaming of Troy, Heinrich Schliemann, discovered

TROY: The Wooden Horse. Is it the Original?



what he felt was the site of the vanished city. He excavated, amateurishly, before the art became a scientific technique, destroying as much as he found, removing for himself much of the golden treasury he found, but establishing the fact of the legendary city. The legend itself is something else, as is the way of fable, but some truth must be there as well. Not far are the Straits of the Dardanelles, where a peninsula of the European land mass divides the Aegean Sea, and the narrow straits become the only waterway to Istanbul above the Sea of Marmora. Militarily they are easily defensible. Troy, now a little distance from the sea, may have been closer, as the sea has likely receded over time, and it would then been a fortress, older than 3rd century BC. Schliemann discovered nine levels but no evidence of the city where Hector died fighting against Achilles, and the selfish Paris slew the heroic Greek general in his one weak spot. We see only the layers of ruins still being excavated.

They were enough for us. Our minds filled in the Greek army below the fortress kingdom. The wooden horse is no longer down there; it now stands at the entrance above, about 90 feet high, with a ladder for climbing and windows for looking out. The guide teased that this is the actual horse, and busloads of Turkish schoolkids, all well-behaved until they saw that horse, climbed it with gay abandon, their heads poking out the windows and arms waving. One came up to me proudly waving a newly purchased keychain with a little wooden horse. "Hello!" she cried, her sole English, smiling the broad Turkish smile. The kids are wonderful. I bought Janet a wooden horse too. After, this is -- Troy!

We drove past the quiet meadows of Gelibolu, Gallipoli, the terrible World War I battlefield where Winston Churchill's daring plan to cut off the German armies failed. We ferried, along with the kids, across the Sea of Marmara to the European part of Turkey, for the nation bestrides two continents. Some tourists spent the pleasant half hour ride teaching the lively kids some English and picking up a few Turkish words. We drove past fertile land indicative of Turkey's ample water supply, a marketable commodity, useful inasmuch as a prior source of income, rental for oil pipelines from Iraq has dried up due to the UN embargo. We passed small towns; the older ones have mosques. After the fall of the Ottomans, the revolutionary Mustafa Kamal Atatürk, father of Modern Turkey, forced the state into a secular mould and downplayed the role of religion. He did away with the use of the Arabic language, using English lettering in Arabic

pronunciation. Turks are not Arabs, but Islam per-severes.

## ISTANBUL

We drove to the great city of Istanbul, to which, under his own name, the Roman emperor Constantine had moved his capital from Rome in the 4th Century AD. We would stay in the Old City, the 14th Century walls still abounding in ruin, and magnificent mosques and palaces on either side of the Bosphorus, a large river emerging from the division of the Mar-mara, the other part being the arch-shaped Golden Horn. The Bosphorus, followed north, leads to the Black Sea. Our hotel, a Sheraton, was fine -- once we made our room change and had a room with a splendid view.

## MONEY

Turkey is in worse financial shape than Greece. Its unit of exchange is the lire, and one dollar brings you 30,000 lire. Change a \$50 bill and you are an instant millionaire! I walked around with a wallet stuffed with 500,000, 100,000 and 50,000 lire notes. That night we had a delicious dinner, on our own, at a 5-Star restaurant. It cost 1,700,000 lire, tip included! Not cheap, but I could tell people I left a "250,000 tip!" As an Islamic country Turkey has bazaars, and the Grand Bazaar here is enormous, 3000 shops within its covered streets, all eager to haggle, a technique I had honed well in Egypt. However, I could not use it. Janet wanted a very small tabletop Turkish rug and I found none of the size or colors she needed. And the shopkeepers are more casual than Arab vendors. They loved my broad-brimmed canvas hat; sitting outside their shops when not busy, at least four of them chorused out: "Where's your horse?" (trying, of course, to drum up business). I told one, "This is not a cowboy hat. This is an Indiana Jones hat!" He wasn't stopped. "I have a flying carpet for you!" he said. A few astute shopkeepers even said, since it was Friday, "Shabbat Shalom!" I returned it, and we all laughed.

With over ten million inhabitants, this city is much larger than Athens. We visited a vast underground cistern, a water-storage place in event of war and short supplies, built in the sixth century and supported by twelve rows of eighteen columns, "recycled" from already ancient ruins. In time it was disused and utterly forgotten, then recently found. The columnar fragments often include pieces of sculpture used as support. It was weird.



"The Blue Mosque" in Istanbul

We visited several large and beautiful mosques. Some have more than one minaret; this is a function of the importance of the person who built it. Some have four; one has six. The Blue Mosque, Sultan Ahmet Mosque (six), is in no way blue. British tourists applied the name long ago for the brilliance of its blue stained glass. Unfortunately there is little blue left, due to earthquakes. The principle of a mosque is to have lots of space without interior columns, so supports are at the walls, leading up to a series of half-domes and culminating in a great full dome over-head, with many windows for light. Floors are covered with rugs for worshippers who prostrate themselves in praying. They come whenever they wish, the call of the Muezzin being but a reminder.

The Hagia Sophia, originally a Greek church dating back to the 4th century, was made into a mosque by the conquering Turks in the 15th century, and, by Atatürk into a museum. It has collapsed several times and been rebuilt. The interior is colossal. One column, with a hole worn into one side, is associated with miracles, having cured the headaches of Justinian and made barren women capable of conception. I should have touched it with my knees.

Our last day we visited Suleymaniye Mosque, perhaps the most beautiful, with rich interior colors and windows, and Janet properly wore a kerchief within. She took it off outside and put it around her

neck. An old lady, wearing a kerchief (few Turkish women wear the veil, but many, especially older ladies, wear a kerchief over their heads) dashed to her, gesticulating at Janet's neck and at her head. Janet was puzzled, then realized that the woman wanted her to wear the kerchief, even outside.

The Topkapi Palace, now a museum, was featured in Jules Dassin's caper film of 30 years ago, with a heist of a magnificent jewel-encrusted dagger. It is safely here, glittering still, along with a treasury of beautiful objects and pavilions in the Islamic style. It reminded me of the Alhambra in Granada, Spain.

That evening we went to a night club for belly dancers, although I knew it was for tourists, that no Turk would ever go. I was right. Years ago Janet briefly took up the art, hoping to reduce. We then saw lots of belly dancing, in restaurants and concert halls. The three dancers we saw here would, had they danced before a sultan of old, had their heads chopped off, or their bellies maybe. No sensuality, no effort, no beads! Some men did good Turkish ethnic, rather like Russian, and then a singer and his woman came on and belted out some stuff, talking all languages to the packed house of assorted varieties of tourists. At least we got a reasonably good dinner and drinks on the deal. However, the last few days of the trip my stomach reacted against the diet and after that one great dinner, we spent our final meals at a nearby McDonald's! I could order sim-

ple McChicken.

The last day, after visiting Suleymaniye Mosque, was spent mostly on a broad and pleasant street, the Takkim, on which cars are not allowed, but an inexpensive trolley courses back and forth. It was all shops and some consulates. We stopped at a shop to inquire about a bookshop and remained an hour. Their sole business was scarves and ties, all shapes, sizes, colors, prices, all nice. The owner was Jewish and I was most impressed when he told me his family had been in Turkey for a very long time. "How long?" I asked. He smiled. "500 years," he said. Of course. They were Sephardi, had left Spain in 1492 and settled here at the invitation of the Ottomans. How amazing, to know your family history for a half-millennium, and he did. He told me Spain sends delegations, hoping to get the

Shepard to return, small wonder as they are good people and good businesspeople. However, they have no impulse to go back to the land of their forefathers. We left and found the bookshop, but no Turkish Oz.

Back at the Sheraton for our final night, we enjoyed the pool and looked at the skyline, at the mosques and their minarets against the sky. We were unaware that at a stop en route home in Frankfurt, the Reichsmark would deflate our mighty dollar with a clunk. We were enjoying the lights along the rivers of this busy and colorful city. The gods still hovered behind their timeworn monuments, and the islands were gems inset in an azure sea, while Turkey was a blend of East and West, and the view was a fitting climax to the trip! !\*

Ephesus





## 1995 TAFF Ballot - North America to Europe

### Joe Wesson

Why should you vote for me? Well, I write a little rag called "Joe Wesson Magazine". I was one of the Infamous Runeboys. I worked on Autoclave (1st US fanzine con). I've attended too many American conventions (save me). I know how to stay up late, drink, and make a fool of myself. I've been involved in this thing called Fandom for 25 years (hideous thought). I'm liked or loathed by all the right people. I've always wanted to make the trip, but money . . .

Vote for me, I'm better than hold-over-funds.

And remember, have fun or **DIE**.

*Nominators: Nigel Richardson, Gary Mattingly, Linda Krawecka, Lucy Huntzinger, Garth Danielson*

### Dan Steffan

#### TOP TEN REASONS TO VOTE FOR ME!

- 10] After 26 years in Fandom, I still believe that Fans are Slans, (and that Sex Camps in the Ozarks deserve reconsideration).
- 9] I edited eight issues of *Boonfark*..
- 8] I was nominated for the Fanartist Hugo Award, even though my cat drew every thing.
- 7] I co-edited 42 issues of *Pong*.
- 6] I promise to French kiss D. West.
- 5] I co-edited five issues of *Science Fiction Eye*.
- 4] My wife will show you her Tattoos.
- 3] I co-edit *BLAT*.
- 2] I've seen Ted White naked.
- 1] The drinks are on me!

*Nominators: Ted White, Greg Pickersgill, Robert Lichtman, Dave Langford, Andy Hooper*

### Samanda b Jeudé

You should vote for me because: I am short, red-headed, busty, and wear VERY low cut dresses; all but one of my magic tatoo's (the one in a "private" place) will be available for viewing; after 20 years in Fandom, I know lots of Fun Fannish Traditions; I won the Big Heart for my big . . . hearts ; ) I am mom to a flying kitten; my Klingons will get you if you don't!  
The real reason: I will be looking in Britain (and, if possible, parts of Europe) to see how Electrical Eggs Access can help bring ALL fans into fandom.

*Nominators: Bob Shaw, Charlotte Proctor, Dick & Nicki Lynch, George "Lan" Laskowski, Andy Croft*

**Please read and fill out both sides of this sheet. Send in entire sheet as your vote.**

**Do not detach this portion!**

I vote for (rank 1, 2, 3, 4, Etc.)

Send Ballot & Donation to:

( ) Joe Wesson

**Jeanne Bowman**

( ) Dan Steffan

P.O. Box 982  
Glen Ellen, CA USA  
95442-0982

( ) Samanda b Jeudé

**Abigail Frost**

( ) Hold Over Funds

95 Wilmo St  
London, E2 0BP  
United Kingdom

( ) No Preference

## 1995 TAFF Ballot

**What is TAFF?** - The Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund was created in 1953 for the purpose of providing funds to bring well-known and popular fans familiar to those on both sides of the ocean across the Atlantic. Since that time TAFF has regularly brought North American fans to European conventions and European fans to North American conventions. TAFF exists solely through the support of fandom. The candidates are voted on by interested fans all over the world, and each vote is accompanied by a donation of not less than \$2 or £1. These votes and the continued generosity of fandom, are what make TAFF possible.

**Who may vote?** - Voting in the 1995 race is open to anyone who was active in fandom prior to September 1993, and who contribute at least \$2 or £1 to the Fund. Larger contributions will be gratefully accepted. Voting is by secret ballot: only one vote per person, and **you must sign your ballot**. You may change your vote at any time prior to the deadline.

**Deadline** - Votes in this race must reach the administrators by midnight April 29, 1995.

**Voting Details** - TAFF uses a preferential ballot system which guarantees automatic runoffs until a majority is obtained. You rank the candidates in the exact order of your preference for them. If the leading first place candidate does not get a majority, the first-place votes for the lowest ranking candidate are dropped, and the second-place votes on those ballots are counted as first-place votes. This process repeats itself until one candidate has a majority. Your vote for second and third place are important, but you may give your candidate only one ranking.

In order to win, a candidate must receive at least 20% of the first-ballot first-place votes on both sides of the Atlantic, separately. Any candidate failing to receive this minimum percentage on either side will be dropped, and the second place votes on their ballots counted as first place votes in the next ballot count. Thus candidates and their supporters will need to canvass fans on both sides of the pond. You may send your ballot to either administrator, but it will be tabulated with votes from the side of the Atlantic on which you reside. Votes from fans not resident in either Europe or North America will not count toward either 20% minimum, but are important to the outcome of the race!

**Hold Over Funds** - This choice, like "No Award" in Hugo balloting gives you the chance to vote for no TAFF trip this year, if the candidates do not appeal. Hold Over Funds may be voted in any position, and is exempt from the 20% requirement; thus, should it receive a majority of the votes on the final ballot, no TAFF trip will be held this year regardless of how many votes Hold Over Funds received on the first ballot.

**No Preference** - For Voters who prefer not to choose between candidates, but don't want the trip held over.

**Donations** - TAFF gratefully accepts your freely given money and material for auction; such generosity has sustained the Fund for 40 years. TAFF is fandom's oldest travel fund and one of it's worthiest causes - give early and often! Please contact your nearest administrator for details.

**Candidates** - Each candidate has posted a bond, promising - barring Acts of God - to travel to Intersection, the 1995 World Science Fiction Convention in Glasgow, Scotland, August 24-28, 1995 if elected; and has provided signed nominations and a platform (overleaf).

**Please read both sides of this ballot before voting. Send the entire sheet as your vote.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
name

\_\_\_\_\_  
street

\_\_\_\_\_  
town

\_\_\_\_\_  
nation

\_\_\_\_\_  
phone number (we do not list or exchange this information)

\_\_\_\_\_  
signature

Enclosed is \_\_\_\_\_ as a contribution to TAFF. Please make cheques, etc., payable to Jeanne Bowman or Abigail Frost, not to "TAFF" and in the currency of the administrators country.

If you think your name may not be known to the administrators, then in order to qualify your vote please give, in the space below, the name and address of an active fan (not a fan group, a candidate or their nominator) who is known to them and to whom you are known:

*Reproduction of this form is encouraged. It is the official voting vehicle and must be reproduced verbatim.*

*Anyone so doing should put their name here:* George Ian Laskowski



I am supporting Samantha for TAFF, and was delighted to give her space in my fanzine to tell others about herself, and let her present some of her work in fandom. Read and enjoy this, and look for her other articles in this issue. --Lan

## Samanda b Jeudé for **TAFF**

### Information about Samanda

by Samanda b Jeudé



### TAFF Prospectus

My name is Samanda b Jeude; I'd like to be considered for TAFF in 1995.

My credentials are: I have written book reviews for fanzines since 1976; I have worked on World-Cons since 1983, as a Gopher up to being Department Head; I was the Registrar and Sales Director for the Atlanta in '95 Bid; I have won the Rebel Award, and the Big Heart. I have co-founded, run, and raised funds for Electrical Eggs Access, a Handicap Access Organization dedicated to bringing all fans into fandom regardless of physical ability or planet of origin.

### Long Autobiography

What I Did For My Summer Vacation Life

I was born in Vanderbergh County (Lower Indiana, now a part of Evansville) on the 7th anniversary of Hiroshima's Big Day in the Sun, and have tried to live up to that auspicious beginning. My parents were nice, statistically normal (yes, there's a horror story in that and I'm writing it up as fiction) people with a two-story, red-brick-with-white-trim house. We didn't have a picket fence, but I do have an older sister, Ruth, and a younger brother, Ted. We were never allowed a dog or cat (because my father had lost his beloved bull terrier as a boy, and vowed he'd never make us kids suffer through the horror of losing a pet), so we had goldfish and turtles, none of which ever survived a month.

My parents are a little strange.

My grandparents were strange indifferent ways, being (on my mother's side) an aristocrat who married a Scots policeman and (on my father's side) two hard-working folks who never lived a dull day in their life. Ask me about my Grampa Oscar, and I'll keep you amused for hours.

Noticing that Ruth was growing up to be a nice, statistically normal person, I decided to make sure I

wouldn't be "normal" in any conceivable way; I went about this by cleverly catching polio and then defying the doctors' predictions that I'd never (a) live; (b) sit up; (c) walk; or (d) pass the age of thirty and get married. I did all of the above, and still do.

My parents made their statistically normal job-related move in 1963, taking us to Hell Kankakee Illinois, where good girls had no brains and good families kept their "cripples" in nursing homes. I spent most of my time there reading through the children's section of the library—three times. After the fifth (or was it the 7th?) time I checked out Heinlein's *Citizen of the Galaxy* (or was it Andre Norton's *Storm over Warlock*?), the head librarian took pity on me and allowed me to browse the adult stacks. Sheer bliss! For the eight months it took to go through the adult stacks. Kankakee had a pitifully small library.

I endured for seven years before escaping in 1970 (I would have gotten out earlier, but the high school had this silly rule that if an able-bodied boy couldn't get out in three years, "that damned Jeudé kid" couldn't get out of prison school either) to return to Evansville. My mother's parents were both long dead, and Grandma Jeudé had just "passed on". So I joined my Grampa, the University Mascot, at good ol' U. of Evansville where I met Guy McLimore, a fellow SF fan. Grampa and I became good friends, Guy and I became good friends, and life would have been so much simpler if I hadn't been so Scots in my attitude towards my scholarship. See, I had this 4-year scholarship, no strings attached on how many schools you went to, and I decided to weasel a Master's Degree out of it.

I would have, too, if I hadn't had the bad luck to fall in love with someone ordinary, the first day at Indiana University (Bloomington, IN campus). "Mr. Ordinary" didn't approve of SF, or my friends, or...you get the picture. For eight months I was a total idiot. Then I wised up, kicked him out, looked at the Master's Degree work I hadn't fin-

ished, and ... got a job. For a year I worked at a print shop, learning all sorts of useful skills that today can be done with the touch of a finger on any computer with good desktop-publishing software. But it got me enough money to go back and finish my degree work ...

... and that was when Guy, who had followed my footsteps in IU, introduced me to the IU SF club. The year was 1975, the time was ripe for me to discover Fandom, and I went after it in my usual way: total immersion. Three months after my initial introduction, the club convinced me to attend **Riverson** (the very first), where one of the Guests of Honor was my favorite author, Thomas Burnett Swann.

He was sweet enough to this neofan to give an hours' chat, then gave me his address and promised to write back "unless I'm working on a book." I didn't know he was dying of skin cancer, so when Tom stopped writing, I waited for his next book (*Queen's Walk in the Dust*). When I learned, at **Riverson II**, that he had died, I was crushed. But by then I had hoarded my money for that Holy Grail of Fandom, the Worldcon.

The 1976 Worldcon was **MidAmeriCon**, commonly known as **Big Mac**. I did my first (and only) Worldcon Masquerade there: application of the contents of two pots of gold paint, strategically placed purple-paint spirals, and a G-string with a train. Robert A. Heinlein was the Guest of Honor, and I wanted to be That Red-Headed Venusburg Gal. I guess it worked; he remembered me the following day and commented that he'd like the costume. So, evidently did a lot of fans; for several years thereafter, fans unknown to me (I've seen no strangers in Fandom, just friends I haven't met yet) would come up, say "Don't I know you ...?", look down to my bust, and say, "Yeah! Spirals!" Being five-foot nothing (a bit over a meter and a half) means I've gotten to know a lot of fans by their, ah, chests, but it was a new experience to have the "recognition" reversed!

I became an entrenched Midwest fan, writing an occasional book review for fanzines, and running an establishment called "Sam's Hostelry" in Bloomington, Indiana. If you knew me (or a friend of mine) and needed a place to sleep, there was always room in my two-bedroom apartment for one more. Gramma Jeude's Dutch oven was filled with beans and whatever, and the only real House Rules were: Thou Shalt Not Let the Pot Run Dry, and Thou Shalt Not Mess With Sam's Job. I still have several recipes from this era, including my (in)famous Aztec Chili and Kosher Lentil Soup.

I'd probably still be there if the polio hadn't reared its nasty head with something we now know is Post-Polio Syndrome. All I knew was I was tired, couldn't pull down my 10-hours-a-day work week, and still hit cons. So I went home to Evansville to play den mother for Guy -- who had yet again anticipated my needs -- two of his friends and a disabled Vietnam Vet of whom I owned 197 pounds (it's a loooong story). It was a good time to return; five months after I returned, Grampa began to lose the fight with stomach cancer he'd successfully battled in the early 70s.

Practically the last thing Grampa and I talked about was my lack of a steady guy (I'd been engaged to, or living with, six men, not counting visitors to the Hostelry, or the "boys" I was Den Mothering). "You'll find him," Grampa was sure. "Just keep hoping." By the time the 1980 Worldcon rolled around, I was past hoping. Then an old friend who hadn't seen me for a while told me to "Go find yourself someone perfect, marry him, and live happily ever after." An hour after Harlan delivered this exhortation, a dark-haired man with a black beard wearing a T-shirt that said "Genesis" walked by. I asked him what the T-shirt meant, we got to talking, and ...

...and the next year we went together to the Denver WorldCon. All my friends said, "Let us know when you're getting married," and I said, "Are you nuts? I'm never getting married! Besides, I like Don Cook too much to ruin his life."

Six months after *that*, when I started worrying about where I'd be in another six months when the lease ran out, he bushwacked me. "I got this great idea: why don't I come up for **Riverson** the week before your lease runs out? We can packyourstuff seeyourdoctor meetyourfriends getmarriedandmove youdownhere so we can live together." I agreed, he hung up, I wondered why, went back and reviewed what he had said: "pack your stuff, see your doctor, meet your friends, GET MARRIED!!!" "Cook, you ambushed me!" I accused when he called the next night. "You agreed," he riposted.

So we got married -- a week before I turned 30. Best bushwacking I ever had.

Donald introduced me to more than just Atlanta. He had moved there from Chicago as a kid and never wanted to leave. As a major Atlanta booster, he thought the idea of a 1986 WorldCon was a great idea. So did I, but I hadn't counted on working on a Bid! Once we won, it was assumed I'd run Handicapped Access ... and by then I thought that was a good idea. I had seen it done poorly (and wrong) for two years running, and another polio

survivor, Esther Breslau, and I came up with a way to run Access that wasn't expensive, intrusive, or weighed heavily in favor of one handicap over others (Evansville has a horse-racing track, so I grew up knowing what a handicap was: something you put on the best horses so that the other horses have a chance at winning the race. Considering my lifestyle, I figured this stupid post-polio syndrome was yet another handicap to let the rest of the world catch up with me!). I had just recently started using a 3-wheeled scooter which I referred to as "electric legs". A hiccup gave us the name of the organization: Electrical Eggs. [See, "It All Started With ...." on page 1]

Along the way, Eggs picked up a lot of good workers, a few power-hungry piranhas whom we have since let go, many delighted "customers", and many friends. E' Eggs has survived because a lot of people put their hard work and time into the organization, including at the top of the list: Esther Breslau and her husband Michael, Marcia Kelly McCoy, Marilyn and Robert Teague, Thea, and, oh yeah, some folks named Cook and Jude. The Jude woman was given Southern Fandom's highest accolade, the Rebel, in 1991, which floored her. I enjoyed being a Fan Guest of Honor at (appropriately) **Rivercon** in 1988 with Kelly and Laura Freas (Laura and I were at IU, in the same dorm, in 1974; if it hadn't been for Mr. Ordinary, we probably could have started our friendship and --and, who knows? Our career in Fandom -- several years earlier) and at **Chattacon** in 1991 with Mercedes Lackey and Larry Dixon and others.

Donald and I became "Mr. and Mrs. Atlanta in '95" back in 1989. In 1992, at that year's **Rivercon**, I told GoH "Misty" Lackey how moved I had been by *The Ship Who Searched* (*The Ship Who Sang* was the only thing that kept me sane in 1968), how much I had identified with Tia. She grinned and said, "She should; I based her on you." Earlier that year, filker B.J. Willinger wrote a folksong about me, "Bonsai". Marty Gear, Masquerade Master of Ceremonies extraordinaire, named me as a Journeyman Judge for **MagiCon**. And at **MagiCon**'s Hugo Awards Ceremony, Forrey Ackerman announced that the 1992 Big Heart was "Judy, Judy, Jude." I walked up, blurted an acceptance speech, waited for the crowd to quiet so I could tell Forrey I needed to go back out the way I came.... I know *Barrayar* won that night, but the rest of the Award Ceremonies was a wonderful blur.

We came home to a basement full of kittens. Some human-shaped slime mold had dumped these

month-old babies with a bowl of kibble at the side of the road near our house, and a kindly Bid member had rescued them. As we had just lost a cat -- the Duchess, an ancient black cat with lurid silk -- we felt that the kittens had come to console us.

They were and are: a red-long-wavy-haired boy kitten, and two girls, one white, one tortoise-shell. Donald wanted to call them Red, White and Blue; "Blue" became Jazz (because she's so perky) the Nympho, "White" became Wyoh, aka Mrs. Bell after Tink fell in love with her, and "Red", the runt ("I wanna call him Red." "Call him something different!") became Something Completely Different, Differ for short, aka The One That Flies (for this, you *must* see the pictures). We also have Tinker, a meter-long, 20+ pound ginger Egyptian Mau so retarded he thinks he's a dog, and Lady Ascot, a tortoise-shell Berman who deigns to pay attention only to The Great God Don. Of all our "kids", Differ is the spoiled one who gets to do whatever he wants because (a) he became the biggest of the kittens (and never matured); ever play with a 12 pound kitten? It's an experience not to be missed); and (b) he calls me "Mom".

So do the Klingons. See, I got adopted by this band of Klingons who were looking for a Matriarch and said I'd make "a perfect Klingon mother." They have helped Eggs a lot; they've also helped just plain us. Six of them came by last year to help us paint the house. The neighbors, luckily, have decided we're Weird But Nice, so the sight of several 6+ foot-tall guys slinging cans of paint and singing "The House of Ral is painted with Romulan blood! The House needs a new coat of paint, kill a Rommy for Mommy!" in 105° heat was amusing and not a reason to call the police--or the local Loony Bin. This year it was the main part of the family, Neil and Gail Fuller, who got to play house games; they bought a house and moved in, so we had to figure out another way to waterproof our deck.

That's the newest feature of our house: the deck which ties our house (set on a wooded lot) to the woods behind the house. There's a hot tub there, too (lots of fun for visitors). Between the house, the fun, the trees, the Library (several thousand books), a large kitchen, an ample supply of kitties to pat, and several computers (Macintoshes; Macs are very friendly to the one-handed or computer illiterate), we have what one friend calls "the perfect summer camp."

To quote Grampa: "If it ain't Heaven, it's close enough for me." [✱]

# EUNUCHS IN SPACE:

## Or Sex (and Conception) in Zero-G

by Dennis K. Fischer

*"Earth is the cradle of humanity, but one cannot live in the cradle forever."*

--Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, 1899

Talk about outer space or zero-G sex, and many folk begin conjuring up images of Barbarella doing a sexy striptease or Roger Moore as James Bond floating towards nookie in *Moonraker* or the possibility of comfortably trying out some of the more exotic positions in the *Kama Sutra*, combining in new and stimulating combinations.

Sadly, reality in no way echoes these erotic permutations. Recently talking with Dr. Jerry Brown of the United States Space Foundation, he explained how five medical specialists had been assigned to study the problems of producing children in space, with special attention on where gravity is needed in this process.

Thus far the details are still conjecture, though the Russians have had a working couple in space. NASA is still a rather prudish organization and doesn't want to publicize its interest in this area, fearing headlines about how taxpayers' dollars are being spent in smutty experiments.

Obviously, there is no possibility of sex outside a space ship or station. Without a pressurized atmosphere, the cell pressure of the body is sufficient to swell, bloat and rupture in a few minutes. And sex inside spacesuits is hard to conceive at best.

However, the possibility of having the ability to maneuver one's partner in any position or movement you want is exotic and intriguing enough, that down here on Earth the concept still fires the imagination. Imagine being about to spin your partner around the point of contact, but consider that your partner would spin around his/her center of gravity, which could easily cause wobble.

A Dr. Lerner has designed and patented a space bungi cord system for copulating couples, designed with the intention of keeping couples in zero-G from flying apart. Remembering Newton's laws makes keeping partners together difficult, but not impossible, and partners into bondage might be at a particular advantage.

The purpose of this article, however, is not

merely to consider the potential pleasure but examine the serious challenges of the colonization of space, which requires that mankind be able to propagate in space if our species is to expand through the solar system.

Let's examine the male anatomy. Male testicles are outside the body to allow (pendicular) cooling aided by sweat and evaporation. If the testes reach the temperature of 104°F, the sperm begins to deteriorate. By 108°F, the man would be rendered sterile. It is not yet known to what extent gravity affects sperm manufacture, but we know this is a 73 day process, so there may well be a time limit to the availability of viable sperm. Working inside a spacesuit, for example, generates a lot of heat.

Another overlooked aspect is that males' sexual response is visually stimulated for most sex acts. Space offers a shortage of such stimuli. For example, women would most often be dressed in asexual jumpsuits. Their hair would continually move in the direction they were last headed (e.g., even if their bodies stop, their hair would float forward past their faces). The lack of gravity causes their faces to pool liquid towards the extremities making them seem fatter.

Additionally, males tend to be secluded breeders, and privacy is a commodity almost unheard of on a space station. A couple couldn't go for some recreational nookie on modern spaceships without everyone else aboard knowing about it in some fashion. There simply are no closed doors in space. The spacecraft itself vibrates when someone starts moving. (An example of the lack of privacy is the fact that the space shuttle has only a half curtain for its bathroom area.)

The male testosterone cycle on Earth is based on a 24 hour cycle, and is highest at 10:30 or 11:00 at night, slows by 5:00 and plummets in daylight. Studies have shown that in space the cycle flattens out, ergo no sex drive. Another problem in long-term spaceflight is that with no visual stimulation,

no testosterone, the testicles get smaller until the sex drive is completely lost and doesn't return without injecting huge doses of hormones.

Complicating matters is the matter of the exchange of bacteria and viruses. In space, the immune system shuts down. Because there is nothing to trigger immunity, the few bacteria and viruses aboard being dealt with and no new ones coming along, the immunity system shuts down and no new antibodies are built up, which in essence means that long-term astronauts come down with AIDS.

Females on Earth are affected by the 28-day cycle of lunar pull. Females in space find themselves in a 45 minute cycle or their cycle stops or they begin to revert in their sexual characteristics. Without gravity, the eggs would not normally descend down the fallopian tubes, which makes the problem of menstruation in space rather difficult, let alone conception. Perhaps the Pill can help. Women drain via gravity. With no gravity, there is an increase in yeast and viral infections. The pH of the vaginal area is changed, and the vagina is very pH oriented. Cleanliness and cleaning, perhaps by vacuuming, would be essential.

Additionally, consider the radiation hazard to women, who reach puberty with a limited amount of eggs (approximately 4500) which would all be irradiated. (Men would also be irradiated, but sperm supplies are constantly being replaced and replenished. Nevertheless, for a long trip, say to Mars, it might well be wiser to use people who are post-climacteric [menopause] because a) they would not be having children, with the attendant dangers of mutation and b) should they contract cancer, they are near enough to the end of their life spans that cancer would not notably shorten their lives. People should not lose sight of the fact that extensive space travel entails significant dangers and sacrifices.)

Say conception should take place despite all these obstacles, there would be a high likelihood of an ectopic pregnancy as without gravity, how would the fertilized egg find the uterine wall? Centripetal force won't help--its effects are quite different from that of a gravity wave. We might use a vacuum system to pull eggs through the fallopian tubes.

What the Russians found out was that their men couldn't perform while their women went into unpredictable cycles. There was also a change in the mammary glands which are gravity driven for the production of milk. Without gravity, the milk



might not flow.

During the gestation process, there are quite a few discharges which would remain internal. Additionally, gravity helps the fetus position itself head-down over the vaginal opening. In zero-G, there is a much greater likelihood of breach births. We still don't know if a fetus would develop normally in zero-G, though there have been sexual experiments with other animals.

For example, fruit flies, one of the Earth's most prolific species, won't mate in space. Males make one pass and quit. Quail eggs laid in space cracked. Fish eggs would hatch, but the fish couldn't swim. Spiders could spin webs in space, but with nothing to catch in them, soon died.

Chimpanzees simply weren't interested in sex. Experiencing zero-G is like feeling you are constantly falling, so the chimps clung desperately to the bars of their cages, hoping to stop the falling feeling. They became majorly upset and, typical of the species, threw feces through the bars in frustration. (Note: This led to the banning of brown M&Ms from all space shuttle missions. The astronauts liked to launch M&Ms at each other and catch them in their mouths. Unfortunately, a small round pellet of simian feces looks almost exactly like a brown M&M, leading to some predictably repellent

results.)

Cats won't adapt to zero-G. With no sense of direction, they go psychotic and wild after experiencing zero-G in the KC-135 (AKA the "Vomit Comet"). Dogs, because of their greater trust in human masters, tended to weather the experiment better, but even so, 40% of all humans experiencing zero-G tended to remain sick for long periods of time.

Due to the massive distances involved, mankind will not reach the stars unless it is able to have children in space, which leaves Pluto as the maximal distance we can go as of now.

Experiments were tried with rats using centripetal force, but that exerts force in only one plane of motion. The inner ear of Humans are sensitive to three planes of motion (pitch, bank and yaw), and the minute someone gets out of rotation they become violently ill. The rats became so sick that they weren't interested. Bees would fly up once like rockets, hit the ceiling, and from then on would only crawl, swearing off flying permanently; thought they still would create hexagonal cones.

Let's suppose we surmount all these difficulties and actually get a child delivered. If it lives two years in a zero-gravity environment, it could never live in a gravity environment, which begs a moral question: to we have the right to put someone in a space environment forever? That person would never feel a natural breeze, hear the sounds of the ocean's waves crashing, live the kind of lifestyle we've come to expect. He or she would be a prisoner forever in that zero-G environment, the jail of space. What kind of person is she then? Human or alien? What rights would they have? Who do they belong to? Being a precious commodity, do they belong to their parents, the engineers that keep them alive, or is the responsibility shared by the entire community?

We don't know what percentage of gravity is needed for normal development in a human. Someone born in a zero-G environment would have no vision in a on-G environment. Images would get fuzzy with pressure as the elliptically shaped eye would spin up. The muscles in the skull move the eye where we want to look, but they do not pull the eye down, as gravity takes care of that job. The neck muscles are developed in response to gravity. A child born in space might never hold its head upright but rather have it flopping over to the side.

Would a child born in space have to be sent home for normal development and then return? Would this be possible? If there was a long flight

to another star, the child would have to stay aboard the ship. The only hope for colonizing the planet would be a well-timed birth that was sent planetward, but then who would take care of the infant while its parents are trapped in their zero-G ship environment?

If that weren't enough, bones in deep space dump calcium, about 25% being disposed of through the urinary system. Astronauts are required to get four hours a day of exercise. The thrusters in Skylab kept having to be activated whenever the astronauts exercised because their running was spinning the entire ship until someone got the bright idea of having astronauts running in opposite directions.

In space, blood is pulled down to the extremities. The blood tends to pool in the heart, which decreases in size because it doesn't have to work as hard to perform its function.

The vestibular system (inner ear) has autolift which float in a fluid, and these sensations are amplified, giving us our kinetic sense. In space, all these hairs float and don't send messages. The brain interprets this as meaning that the body must be falling and sends a message to the stomach to get sick by building up the acid content. Hence, many astronauts spend their first days in zero-G sick and immobile, and 40% have the tendency to get over it. Those who most depend on their inner ears' six semi-circular canals, such as the best athletes, tend to get the sickest, hence gymnasts and tumblers become acutely sick.

The space environment would only benefit a small number of people such as those with weak hearts, burn patients who suffer from the pressure of touching things and the weight of their bandages, bone fracture patients whose bones would heal more rapidly in space, and a few of the physically handicapped who will find their lack of strength no longer such a detriment.

But the fact remains that space, at least until the creation of artificial gravity, will never be the domain of sexual athletes that a few fondly imagine it to be. There is a great deal of difference between the mile-high club and those over 50 miles up. Tomorrow's astronauts will be virtual eunuchs with little inclination and perhaps little ability to perform given the challenges of the zero-G environment. Further study is obviously called for if we as a species are ever going to surmount these difficulties. Perhaps then, space will be sexy once more. [✱]

# Rosabelle, Believe

by Janeen S. DeBoard

Harry Houdini struggled to draw his last breath.

He wanted it to be his last. Peritonitis was a terrible way to die, and he knew there was nothing more his doctors could do for him. It was time to let it end, to exit as gracefully as he could.

Yet letting go was harder than he had ever thought it would be. Life held him fast in its mindless, primitive grip. His heart contracted again, and again; his lungs caught another ragged breath, and another.

*I am tired of fighting...*

He felt a touch on his brow. A hand, cool and gentle, soothing and familiar. "Mother," he whispered. "Mother, where have you been?"

The pain began to ease. He found he could sit up. "I've been waiting for you, Harry," she said. Her eyes shone, and she looked so vital, so well. "I knew you would come to me when it was time."

"Mother --" He got to his feet and embraced her. It had been so long, so long! "Why have you come to me now? How can you be here?"

She only shook her head, her eyes bright. "In time, Harry. In time you will understand. Come with me, now." She took him by the hand.

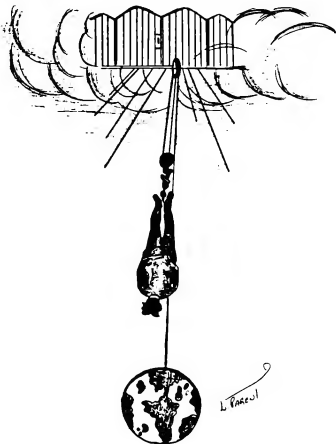
He glanced down and saw his pale, still body lying on the narrow hospital bed. Bess lay across it, her head pillowed on his motionless chest, weeping for her husband.

He struggled to turn back, to reach back for Bess. "I must go to her! I must let her know I am all right now! I promised!"

His mother did not look back. She drew him along with her, and he found he could not resist. "In time, Harry," she repeated. And before he knew it the hospital room was gone, vanishing like a mirage in a burst of sunlight.

#

He was in a lovely garden, a park of some kind. It held all the beauties that come to his mind when he thought of such a place: lush green grass, a gar-



den of pink roses, a clear and rippling lake lined with elegant weeping willows. The sunlight warmed him even as the breeze, fragrant with grass and flowers, ruffled his hair.

Never had he imagined such a sense of peace, of happiness. His mother had walked away and sat now beside the peaceful lake with three other silver-haired ladies, drinking tea at a wrought-iron table. A flock of white swans flew in to settle on the waters of the lake.

"Is this heaven?" he whispered.

"It's your heaven," said a man behind him.

Houdini turned and stared at the man. He did not recall ever seeing him before; he was short and dapper in his brown suit and derby hat, and looked to be a stock trader or other sort of business man. "Do I know you, sir?"



"You do now," the man said extending his hand. "Name's Johnson. Welcome home."

"Home." Harry shook the stranger's hand. "Then--this is it? I'm dead, and gone to heaven?"

"This is it," Johnson said. "You'll find everything here that you ever could have dreamed of. All the people you ever loved are here -- or will be. You'll never want for anything. You'll never know pain, or fear." He grinned. "You can even practice those tricks of yours to your heart's content. They'll be just as difficult, but far less painful."

Houdini grinned back at the man -- and then laughed out loud as the greatest joy surged through him. "Then it's true! There is an afterlife -- there is a heaven!"

He gripped Johnson's shoulder. "I must tell Bess! She's my wife -- or she was -- I mean, I must let her know! We have a message -- a code -- and she's the only one who knows what it is. I must say to her, '*Rosabelle, believe*,' and then she will know that I am here!"

"Is it possible? Is there a way to return? You must tell me!"

Johnson reached up and patted Houdini's gripping hand. "You don't think you're the first one to ask that question, do you? Everyone wants to know that when they first arrive."

Houdini let go of the man's shoulder. "Then why has no one ever come back? It must be possible! My mother returned, just as I -- just when --"

"Oh, it's quite possible, Harry. But it is, shall I say, strongly discouraged. Your mother came to you just to help you over. She didn't stay, and no one else saw her."

"Do you mean I would be punished if I went back and spoke to Bess?"

"No, no," Johnson said. "No one here will punish you. This is heaven, isn't it? But -- think back on your own life. Think what would have happened if you had known for certain, while you were still back there, of exactly what waited for you here."

Houdini turned and paced slowly across the sweet green grass. "I'm not sure I would have believed it," he said, after a moment. "I still had to see it for myself, and I'd been promised an afterlife by the very highest authorities."

"But not by someone who'd been here. Someone whom you knew, and had come back to tell you face to face."

"No. Not by a ghost," he had to admit.

"Well, there you are. Now you understand why so few of us ever attempt to go back, much less contact the living. How different would your life

have been if you'd been visited by a ghost -- by your mother, say -- and you knew for certain what the afterlife was like? That by taking that one brief step, you would be forever free of pain and fear and forever with the ones you loved? How much value would your short and suffering life have held for you then?"

"Nothing would have changed," Houdini insisted. "I simply would not have had to live in fear of death."

He squared his shoulders. "I promised Bess that if there was a way to return, I would find it. And I want you to tell me the way!"

Johnson shrugged. "There's nothing to tell, Harry. If you want to go back, then just go. But remember--you'll have to live with the consequences for all eternity. Being dead is a neat trick, but you can only do it once. And even you can't escape that." He turned and walked away, strolling along the shore of the lake, and disappearing beneath the weeping willow grove.

Houdini looked up at the lovely blue sky, at the delicate white clouds drifting on the soft breeze.

*Just go...*

"Bess," he whispered, and closed his eyes.

The sound of weeping interrupted him. His eyes snapped open.

He still stood in the grass beside the lake, and his mother still sat drinking tea with the ladies at the white wrought-iron table. But at another table a little distance from them, a young woman sat alone, crying, her long blonde hair spilling over her face as she wept.

He had to go to her. "What is it?" he asked, as gently as he could. "This is heaven, you know. What could be wrong here?"

"Oh, sir --" she grasped his hand, and looked up at him. Not more than twenty, he guessed, simple and poor before coming here, no doubt. "Why, it's you!" she said. "The magician! Mr. Houdini!"

"Yes," he said patiently. "Now tell me, please. Why do you cry in heaven?"

"It's my child," she answered, touching at her eyes with her torn shawl. "He's just an infant. I didn't live much past his birth, and I will never know him. How can I bear to live without him, even here?"

"I don't know," Houdini said. "I only wonder that there could be so much sadness in this place." He pulled out a chair from beside the table and sat down across from the woman. "Now, tell me. What's your name?"

"D-Darla," she answered, trying bravely to



stop the tears.

"Darla." He folded his hands. "I am sorry you lost your child. But surely you know that you will, indeed, see him again someday. You will always be here waiting for him, watching over him as he lives his life. And in good time, he will join you in this place and be with you forever."

"But you don't understand," she said, sobbing again. "I had to leave him too soon. I never even touched him. I never held my baby in my arms, not once. My own baby, the only one I will ever have. How can I forget that, even here?"

"I believe I do understand." He smiled at her and reached for her hand. "You can go back and see him, you know. I'm told that we're not supposed to, but if it would comfort you -- I cannot see the harm in your holding him just one time."

"Oh, yes! If I could just hold my little Georgie -- tell him that I love him, and what a fine man he will be, and that I will always be watching over him all through his life! Yes, it would comfort me, and I could remain here and be at peace."

"Then let us go and see your child." He rose from the white chair, still holding her hand.

Together they stood in the sun-dappled shadows beneath the willows. "Think of your baby, Darla. Remember your house, the room where he sleeps. His cradle, his covers, his playthings..."

#

They stood inside a small wooden house, in a nursery, and all was darkness outside. A single candle still burned on the table in the corner. Beside it, wrapped in a faded quilt, a woman snored softly on a cot.

In the cradle, a tiny infant began to whimper and stir. "Georgie! Oh, Georgie! I'm here!" cried Darla. She hurried to the cradle and lifted the baby up, holding him to her cheek, her tears dampening his little white nightgown.

With a shock Houdini realized that while the baby and the room were substantial and whole, normal in appearance, Darla was transparent -- ghostly. As she turned her back to him, crooning to her child, he could still see the baby where she hugged him to her shoulder.

He could see right through her.

Glancing down at his hand, he saw that he looked just the same. He was a ghost now. He was dead. If he had not truly believed it before, he believed it now.

The baby made little soft sounds of contentment. "I will be back for you," Houdini whispered. "I have another place to visit. I'll come back in just a little while."

"No hurry, no hurry," Darla murmured, rocking her baby. She never looked away, and Houdini smiled.

#

Bess shook the flame from the match just as he arrived, just as the soft light of the candle filled the corners of their old familiar bedroom. She sat down at the vanity and Houdini saw that she wore a long satin nightgown. It was the color of cream and edged with heavy lace.

He remembered that nightgown. He remembered everything, most of all his love for Bess. He could have sworn that his heart beat faster, as though he were still alive, at the sight of his beautiful wife here in their own bedroom. It was as though nothing had changed and the happy years of their marriage would continue on and on.

A man could be forgiven for forgetting he was dead.

He started to go to her -- and hesitated. How to approach her? She was not a timid woman, by any means, but he could only imagine how she--or anyone--would react if confronted by a genuine ghost.

He remained in the shadows. Closing his eyes, he tried to fill the room with his presence, to fill Bess's heart and mind with his love for her and the joy he felt at being able to return to her.

Bess...

She looked over her shoulder.

*It's so beautiful there ... more wonderful than we ever imagined.*

"Harry," she whispered, rising to her feet.

*Oh, Bess ... I'm here, I'm here, please don't be afraid ... you need never be afraid of the other side, not ever again ... I have so much to tell you!*

There was no fear in her -- only happiness and excitement. "Harry! Harry! Where are you? Please! Show yourself to me! Come to me, Harry!"

Filled with joy, he was about to leave the shadows -- when a terrible scream, a wail of anguish, jerked him away and all was darkness.

#

He was back in the nursery room with Darla



and her baby. The young woman stood weeping hysterically, uncontrollably, as though she were both laughing and crying at the same time. She seemed to be afflicted at once with the greatest happiness and the most terrible sorrow.

"Darla, what is it? What's wrong?"

Everything appeared to be as he had left it; the woman on the cot went on sleeping soundly, and no one else had come into the room to discover a ghost. Houdini could still hear the baby's happy cooing sounds.

Shaking, sobbing, Darla could only point at the cradle. In it was the infant's still, lifeless form.

"What -- what is this?" he asked in astonishment. "What has happened?"

Darla held up the baby in her arms. And with a shock Houdini realized that it, too, was transparent and unreal, a ghost -- just like he and Darla.

"I told him," she said, in a shaking whisper. "I told my little Georgie how lovely heaven was. How happy I was there, and how he needed never fear dying, not ever. That one day we would be together

there forever. And before I knew--before I knew--"

Houdini touched the baby's face, felt it was warm and alive against Darla's shoulder even though its body lay unmoving in the cradle. "So safe and comforted was the child in its dead mother's arms," he murmured, "so drawn by her joyous thoughts of the afterlife, that he slipped away from life and came to stay with her forever. What could be a greater thing, than to be with mother in heaven?"

He tried to give Darla what comfort he could. "He will always be safe. You will have him with you forever."

"Safe. Yes, safe. But always a babe, always as he is now, and all because of me. Because I could not leave him to life, even with all its pain and doubt. He will never know what he could have been -- and neither will I."

The baby tangled its little fists in her long blonde hair, and she smiled through a rain of tears. "Yes," she said. "I will have him with me forever."

#

Once again, Houdini waited in the shadows.

Bess still searched for him, hurrying around the candlelit room. "Harry! Harry! I know you're here! Please don't leave me again!"

Her agitation tore at his heart. He could see so clearly, now, what would happen if she had seen him, if he told her what he knew.

"Harry! I'll light a candle for you every night! I'll never give up! I'll find a way!"

Her life would be consumed with thoughts of him and of what waited for her -- even if she did choose to remain among the living and endure the tedious wait for the end of her natural life.

"Harry! Harry!"

It would be so easy to draw her in after him, just as Darla had drawn her baby. Bess could as easily choose to take that final step, to go with him to heaven and slip out of this life without a second thought.

She would never know. As much as he loved her -- because he loved her -- she would never know, until the time came for her to make the crossing on her own and she found him there waiting to welcome her.

*Rosabelle, believe. |\*|*

## Crescent Moon

by Anne Valley

crescent moon  
dark/light moon  
jekyll/hyde half-hidden  
will you work your  
half hyde side  
or jekyll healing  
shining bright

what magic or mischief  
crescent moon  
will you show me tonight  
work your magic on me tonight



# Across the Wide Water:

## A Trip Report on Merry Old England and Parts of Scotland

by Elizabeth Ann Osborne

### Part I: England

#### Chapter 1: Preparations

This trip report on my family's journey to England and Scotland during two weeks in August (4-16) in 1991, was inspired by Mike Resnick's travelogues on Africa and the Middle East. Although I am not the writer that Mike Resnick is, I shall try to proceed an entertaining story.

My father came up with the idea of this family trip. He saw that his children were growing up and leaving the nest, so he proposed one last "family vacation". The idea was further influenced by my youngest brother who had planned to take a six-week summer session at Oxford University in England. My father knew of several other families who used this "summer session" as an excuse to take their families to England. I wanted to go since I had a deep and strong interest in history, so much so that I became a member of the Society for Creative Anachronism. For my sister, this was one last big event before she graduated from college and started student teaching in the fall.

By March of 1991, my father was planning the trip. He asked all of us to make suggestions about what to see, and gathered suggestions from people we knew who had been there before. This included a my polite questioning of a Scottish national who had come to the annual Orlando SF convention to promote the Glasgow Worldcon bid. We continued to plan during our Easter holiday together. Dad bought several guidebooks to Great Britain, and we all pored over them. I also bought dad a Rand-McNally road map of the country, which turned out to be so heavily used that it fell apart at the end of the trip. I also consulted my Medieval history reference library that I have at home for my SCA activities.

Our family decided to avoid taking the "tour group" approach and travel on our own. This was done to avoid the "if this is Tuesday, it must be

York" feeling, plus we wanted to freedom to do and plan as we wanted, and not to follow 30 other people. As it ended up, we did have some problems that a tour would have avoided, but we gained more than we lost.

Because we would be driving ourselves all over England, everyone was told to bring no more than two bags each (one bag plus a carry-on). This was a challenge for everyone; this family of six has been known to have eighteen pieces of luggage. I've been known to take two pieces to a weekend convention. But we did it.

During the trip itself, I wanted to keep a journal. I bought a "blank book" and I ended up writing in longhand a full description of our activities. Linda, my sister, and my Father, also bought notebooks and paper to record their thoughts, but I ended up filling not only my won book but also my sister's before the trip was done..

Trouble at work kept me wondering if I would be able to go at all. I ordered my passport in April. Finally I got the OK from my boss, and the plane tickets arrived in the mail. Last minute plans included arrangements for the cats to stay at a kennel, stop the newspaper and mail and other fun things. The weekend of August 4 was also **Tackyeon** (an Orlando, fan-fun Star Trek convention) and a SCA art and Science event, both of which I would miss because of the trip.

Since the flight left at 7:30 Sunday morning, I decided to travel to Orlando on Saturday night. I left work with my baggage in the back seat of my car for the two hour trip to Orlando. I decided against going to Deland, Florida, to spend a few hours at **Tackyeon**, and instead spend some time at Enterprise 1701, an area gaming and SF bookstore, before eating dinner and checking into the Marriott Airport Hotel.

## Chapter 2: The Trip Over

A 5:30 wake-up call and I was out the door, following the hotel's shuttle bus to the airport. Ten minutes later the first problem of the trip comes--no curb side checking of baggage for international flights! While I leave my car in a No Parking zone, I wait in a line for thirty minutes to check in my baggage at the desk--you wouldn't think that there would be this many people traveling so early in the morning. I got back to my car just as two airport traffic cops are about to write a ticket. The baggage handler at the curb said that there were eyeing my car like it "was a fat chicken".

So, off I was to my first stop, Raleigh, North Carolina. On the way I got a good breakfast, then I sit in an empty airport for three hours waiting for my connection. There, the hotel room key reminded me that I had forgotten to check out of my hotel room in Orlando. A quick phone call checked me out of the hotel. Since they had my check, they had my money, and they tell me just to toss the room card into the nearest trashcan. Finally I left Raleigh and arrived in Chicago, eating lunch on the plane.

The connecting plane was full of locals and we came over the city of Chicago from the East. Everyone got a good view of the city, including the downtown area, and the family next to me pointed out their neighborhood and street below. It was indeed a great view, and I looked for the hotels which would be used for the up-coming Worldcon.

O'Hare was a nice airport, full of people and things to do, even if it did seem that I had to walk all the way across it. I wondered how I would contact the rest of my family, worried what I would do if their plane was late, and other such silly things. After about an hour of just sitting, I went browsing at the newsstand. There, while checking out the magazines, I hear a familiar voice. Looking over the bookrack I see my father and sister talking about how they would find me in this crowd! I say hi, and give everyone hugs.

To kill the three hours until our plane left, we started in the Deli. Linda mentioned that it was the fourth time this day that she had eaten, as Dad started to use his camcorder. I looked in her carry-on bag and discovered that it was full of candy and bottled water, Linda looked embarrassed, and my Dad explained that she was worried about liking the food in England. There was a story behind that which I was not being told, although I tried hard to find out what. The water was for us to drink on the plane to overcome jet-lag. My bag was full of

books and household bills which I was trying to get paid before leaving the country.

At around 3PM we boarded a wide-body American Airlines jet for a direct flight to London. We flew north and then took a sharp turn over Mackinac Island and flew east toward London.

The trip itself was surprisingly interesting. I expected to be bored to death, but it seemed the airline was doing its best to entertain us on the way over. We were given cups of water nearly every hour by the flight attendants (we barely made a dent in the bottled water), sold duty-free goods (I bought a make-up case since I had not packed anything like it), and fed dinner. We also watched a movie (*The Maid*, a film made in France with Michael Douglas about a yuppie lawyer who finds love more important than money and jobs), listened to music, read a bit, tried to sleep, and listened to an argument between two flight attendants, all during the seven hours of the flight.

## Chapter 3: Arrival

Since we were flying east, we hit sundown about the time we got to the East Coast. Then it was night flying until we reached London at sunrise. It felt like we had been flying all night even though it had only been seven hours, and was midnight back in Florida. We flew over the red roofs of London and landed at the famous Heathrow Airport. This place looked rather 50-ish and run down after Orlando's new airport, but there were signs of new construction here and there. An interesting item I noticed was that there was lots of advertising in Japanese. We had a long walk to the luggage pick-up, which was further delayed by customs.

There were huge lines, even at this early time of the morning, and everyone was divided into one of three groups. One group was for returning Britains and members of the European Community. North Americans went through the second line, and everyone else, by far the biggest line, went through the third. The third line gave new meaning to the phrase, "yearning to breathe free", as it looked like a refugee convention.

I was called up to the customs man who asked me about my job (I'm a librarian), and how long I'm going to be here, etc., then stamps "Employment Prohibited" on my passport. Another long walk brought us to luggage pickup where we also collected a few luggage carts (like shopping carts). We were waved through the rest of customs, but security was tight. There were no pictures allowed,

and a Japanese tourist got into trouble when he took the lens cap off his camcorder.

I remembered to change some money in the airport and traveled through an underground tunnel to the subway (underground) airport station. The floor sloped ever so slightly; if we had gotten up enough speed we could have sailed through the airport like we were on roller skates. Fear of hitting someone, though, caused us to slow down to a safe speed.

At the underground station, which was nearly empty--Dad bought the tickets. The rest of us studied the map of the underground and I took my first pictures of England. From here on we carried our own bags which seemed to get heavier with every minute. Dad was worried that we would hit rush-hour traffic.

The first look I got of England from on the ground was the inside of some tunnels, the tops of trees, and the backs of some houses as we rushed toward London. It was now seven in the morning and rush hour was in full swing. We had to change trains and the one we got on only had two seats free. Linda and I grabbed them, holding on to two huge pieces of luggage while Dad stood with the rest of the baggage. As the excitement wore off, I began to feel the effects of jet-lag in a big way. I wondered if I would have the strength to give up my seat if an old lady came on. Before that situation arose, we pulled into Victoria Station, our stop.

Every story you might have heard about Grand Central Station applied to Victoria Station. There were crowds of people getting on and off trains, subways, taxis and busses, and droves of people walking in and out. We saw high school students, business people, the homeless, housewives, shoppers and tourists. It was definitely rush hour, and we stand close together to avoid being run over by the rush as Dad searched for a way out.

Victoria Station is a very interesting place. After seeing so many Sherlock Holmes mysteries and other British films, I expected a Victorian Cathedral to Railroads. Instead, the station had a mix of Georgian and Modern styles. VS was a center for the underground, railroads, bus and taxi stop, and a bus station right across the street. If they could land planes in the middle of London, I was sure this would be where they would come down. There were also food stores, small shops, a tourist information center (where we would spend a great deal of time and money), and a small mall, just like those in the US. (There was also a McDonald's in the mall, but we didn't go there.)

We eventually found our way outside the station and wondered where to go from there. Dad

was ready to start wandering the streets until we found our Bed and Breakfast place. I was starting to slowly melt from jet lag and wondered how many hours we would be wandering around London. I suggested a taxi, and we lined up for one.

British taxis looked like little Model A's. I almost expected to see Winston Churchill climb out of one. We stuffed our luggage (just barely getting it in) into the car and ride off. Unhappily we had to give our cabbie directions to the Elizabethan Hotel, but we were happy to find it was only a few blocks away from Victoria Station. We would be staying at B&Bs most of the time we were in Britain. (The quality of the accommodations varied, even within London. There are quite a number of them, and they serve a wide number of people. In fact, the English don't seem to have nearly any roadside motels, and a hotel is a big expensive fancy place with a doorman and lots of servants and mints on the pillow.) Our B&B, and the surrounding area, looked like the set of *Upstairs, Downstairs*. Later I found out that the backs of these homes looked like the second stage of *My Fair Lady*.

We carried our luggage up the stairs and into a narrow hallway. What was once the front room of a house was now the lobby with a front desk, a telly, and some worn Victorian furniture. We were given a front bedroom, a small room with a double bed, two twin beds, and a huge front window that looked out into the street at the front of the building. It was crowded, but we had our own bathroom with tub and shower. We had all brought robes in case we had to walk down the hall to use a communal bathroom, but we never had to do that. We threw ourselves onto the beds to rest "just a while."

About three hours later we were awakened by the arrival of my brother Bob from Oxford. Everyone was glad to see him. We sat and talked a while, and then decided to try to get something to eat. Bob wanted to show us the city, so we wake Linda and get started.

## Chapter 4: The First Tour

Bob took us to Westminster Station via the underground. We came up to the street right at the bottom of Big Ben. It was a great day, full of bright sun and a pleasant view of the River Thames. We stood there watching the people, traffic and crowds. We looked at the Parliament building and I pictured how in ages past the PMs would travel by boat and get off at the steps that led from the River to the Houses of Parliament. We hung out there for

nearly fifteen minutes, waiting for Big Ben to strike one o'clock so we could get it on tape.

There was a bridge across the River and the statue of Boadicea was across the street. It was all very impressive. We walked down the street, awed at the speed of the traffic. Dad said that it was faster than Washington DC, which was the fastest city traffic that he had ever seen. (I was just glad we weren't in Paris, which I heard had the fastest city traffic of any place.) I realized that there would be no driving for us in London.

We walked to Westminster Square and passed by a statue of Winston Churchill which Bob said was electrified so that the pigeons wouldn't drop loads on his bad head. We headed towards Westminster Abbey which was full of tourists: Germans, Italians, French, Japanese and Americans. I passed by a German family reading aloud (in German) from a guidebook, and a Japanese tour group getting a lecture outside the Abbey. This scene was repeated at every tourist spot in London, and at quite a few outside of the city.

The Abbey didn't allow photos to be taken inside (a common rule for most places, I would find). We entered and I found that it was surprisingly small and full of statuary of Victorian politicians and people whose names I had never heard. On the south side, however, I found the grave of Major John Andre, 1751-1780, the unfortunate British officer caught up with Benedict Arnold. It was a strange feeling to find a person so much a part of American history in this place. Few graves were as interesting as this one, and Westminster Abbey is full of them.

There were several small chapels off to the sides and in one (used as a storage room for chairs, was a huge monument to someone I didn't know. But what an impression it made! The monument was nearly two stories high and done in black and white marble. The second story held a man and a woman, nearly life-size, looking down, and a nearly full sized white marble skeleton wrapped in a black marble cloth, who threatens them with a spear. *How did they do that?* was all I could think of. There was no name or plate to tell me who it was, or who built it; it just took my breath away. [Later, back in the US, while I was looking up something else in the library's *Britannia*, I found a picture of the tomb. The caption read, "Monument of Lady Elizabeth Nightingale by Louis-Francois Roubillac in the Chapel of St. Nicholas, Westminster Abbey.)

I wandered out and found Dad, then searched for Linda (we figured if we didn't find her quickly, they would bury her beneath the floor). We found

her and Bob, then went to stand in line for the Royal Tombs.

For this tour we had to pay £2.50 each and walked over Charles Darwin's grave, I guess that for all the arguments he started with the Church. One thing that seemed strange to me were all the little signs that said "No Lecturing", along with all the other signs (like "No Eating", "No Photography"). This was a real puzzle to me, and the signs were repeated throughout the self-guided tour through the Royal Tombs. Later I came across two maintenance men dusting off Henry VII and asked them about it. They replied it was to prevent jams and to keep the crowds moving through the church. It was necessary, I guess, because it was very crowded, and they did work to keep you moving.

The Royal graves were really packed in there. Most of them were of the late Plantagenets to the Tudors and early Stuarts. The tombs of both Elizabeth I and Mary Queens of Scots were there, and what was believed to be the remains of "The Princess in the Tower".

While passing between the wall and the tomb of Mary Queen of Scots, one of the deacons of the Abbey came on the intercom and invited everyone to pray The Lord's Prayer "in your own language", then proceeded to lead everyone in prayer for the return of the western hostages in Lebanon and an end to the civil war in Yugoslavia. This happened in every church we visited, every hour, on the hour.

Finally, we passed the tomb of St. Edward the Confessor, and "the Throne with the Stone" which looked to me to be too small to fit a modern adult. Working our way through the rest of the Abbey I came upon the tomb of King Sebert (d. 616) who, the plate said, "built the first Abbey and was buried here." The Abbey built by St. Edward the Confessor was built around this grave. The last spot we visited was Poets' Corner, and I had to have Chaucer's grave pointed out to me. Also in this area were many monuments to American writers, which were not graves, but "In Memory of" Mark Twain, and Nathaniel Hawthorne, and others. Charles Dickens and other British authors were buried here. I dawdled, but my family threatened to carry me out, so I hurried.

At the end of the tour, we passed by the gift shop which had little miniature copies of Westminster Abbey. I thought they were cute, but didn't buy one because I thought I wouldn't find similar ones elsewhere. Wouldn't you know that *every* place we visited in the next two weeks had mini-copies of the buildings for sale. I could have started a whole col-

lection.

After enjoying the sunlight for a while, we walked over to the Parliament Building. Bob had taken the tour earlier, and he wanted to share it with us. We walked passed the statues of Richard the Lionheart, and Oliver Cromwell, only to be told at the door that there were no more tours since Parliament was not in session. So we walked back to Westminster Pier and looked at the River Thames again. We saw a very impressive building across the river from us. We asked Bob what it was, and he didn't know but thought it might have been the Admiralty.

We got on the underground again and went to a different part of the city. We got off and walked about a block east past the Japanese embassy and found the Hard Rock Cafe of London. It was 3 o'clock and we were all hungry. After a ten minute wait for a table we sat and ate American-style food before getting t-shirts with "Hard Rock London" on them. A short walk through Green Park (right in front of Hard Rock) brought us to the front of Buckingham Palace. While we walked through Green Park, I noticed there were many people just sitting, walking their pets, and laying out to sleep. I never got used to this. My first thought was that someone had been mugged or killed, and then I saw that lots of people were just taking a nap on the grass. And they looked nothing like the homeless.

We came up on Buckingham Palace and suddenly my Dad began to laugh. When I asked him what was so funny, he said that it looked like the back was built out of plywood. BP (as it is referred to in England) was constructed in front with a greyish marble and everywhere else it was made up of a yellowish sandstone, which indeed looked like plywood from a distance. We walked out of the park onto the sidewalk, and nearly got run over by traffic. Bob mentioned that more Americans are killed in London because they are used to looking left, then right, before crossing the street, instead of right first, then left.

Well, we got across the street okay and stood outside the gate with about 100 other tourists from everywhere, including England. It was a small crowd for that spot. The Queen was in (her standard was flying over the Palace), but we didn't see Her. In fact, most of the Royalty was out of town; the younger ones had gone to the Aegean Sea and the rest were headed off to Scotland for the remainder of the summer. They didn't give tours of BP then.

We hung out there for a while. Dad met a pensioner (a retired person) who had been the head

gardener of the flower beds outside for 30 years and talked with him. While he did that, Linda and I were eyeing the soldiers on duty. Despite their red coats and funny black hats they didn't fool around. They carried automatic weapons with bayonets. Nasty. They also looked very young. We also walked down to Lancaster House, which was where the Queen Mother lived, and peeked over the fence.

We heard that in a half an hour there was going to be a "Changing of the Guard". This was just a shift-change, not the real big production that happened every other day (which we didn't even try to see). So to pass the time we went to St. James Park and watched the people and the Royal Ducks. Bob had already told us stories about England, and one of them was about the Royal Ducks. It seems that the ducks in St. James are the property of the Queen, so they are called Royal Ducks. So I had been teasing Bob, asking "How do you know they are Royal Ducks? Do they have little gold crowns on their heads? Are they the King and Queen of ducks? Do they wear shirts that say "Owned by ERII"? Are they stamped on the behind with "HMS Duck"? until Bob said, "Stop with all the %\$^&\*\$# Ducks already!"

Then we walked back to BP to watch the Changing of the Guard (small version), and then back to our B&B. We laid down and went to sleep. Dad did wake us up at nine to ask if we were hungry, but we all said no, and slept until the next morning.

## Chapter 5: Tuesday

The next morning we all got out of bed and had our first English breakfast, scrambled eggs, ham, toast and tea or coffee. For better or worse, that was what we would be eating for the next two weeks each morning. We had planned to visit Hampton Court Palace by boat, but at Westminster Pier, we found that the trip took four hours. Instead, we took a boat down the Thames to the Tower of London. The trip took about twenty minutes and was very pleasant. Many historical sites of London were pointed out to us, along with some of the new development on the river. This development is very controversial. Do you preserve an 800-year-old fish market or do you sell it and build a new hotel on the site? That huge building on the river we saw yesterday turned out to be the old county government building. It had over 3,000 offices and seven miles of hallways. It was also for sale. The site reminded me of the Citrus County Government in Florida which is housed in a few old trailers in the



middle of an unpaved road. This was a long way from that.

The boat came up to the Traitors' Gate at the Tower of London and docked beside it. The crowd was already there and the line to get into the Tower went halfway around the castle. It took about a half hour to get to the front gate, but once there we got in at half price because we had passes from the National Trust. These passes were a great idea. They cost us about \$30, and by using them we got in free at quite a few places. They more than paid for themselves during this trip.

After a security search we went in and waited for the Beefeaters tour. We saw the Bloody Tower and the dreaded Bell Tower, where the unlucky awaited their execution on Tower Hill (just up the road). We saw the Tower Green where executions inside the Tower took place, and watched the ravens of the Tower fly and hop about. These ravens are as big as chickens and had a nasty habit of biting tourists' fingers. They must have been dreaming of eating traitors' heads.

The Tower has been used as a palace, fort, prison, and now a museum. However, it has always been, and still is, a home to the wardens and their families. It had been used as a prison in recent history. The last executions were of some German spies during WW I. The Tower last held a prisoner known as Hess, after his flight to Scotland. He later wrote his wife that he liked his room, but hated the bapies each morning.

The tour ended at the church of St. Peter ad Vincula (in chains). This little church, built in the 1200's, had been and is the local church for those who lived in the Tower. During the reign of Queen Victoria, she decided to modernize the place by installing gas lighting. They dug up the floor and found nearly 1300 bodies. Nearly all had died under torture or execution. Of all of them, only 33 were able to be identified, and the list reads like a Who's Who of Tudor England. The bodies of Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard were here, as were the bodies of Bishop Fisher and Sir Thomas Moore.

The crowds were huge, comprised of British and other tourists. We waited in line some 25 minutes to see the Crown Jewels in the Jewel House. After passing through some rooms with gold plates, punch bowls and maces, we went downstairs, and walked into what was a giant Chubb safe with doors a foot thick (held open by a pair of fire extinguishers). Beside the coronation regalia and some gold plates where wasn't much to see and we moved rather fast through it.

Linda and I sat outside while the guys found the men's room. We didn't even try to get past the crowd into the Punishment and Torture Museum, but did take a look at the Roman wall which was found inside the tower. When the guys came back, we walked through the armor exhibit in the White Tower. This building held armor from pre-Roman times to the Gulf War. It was a good exhibit. I was no specialist on armor, but I was surprised to see an exhibit on Normans with round shields instead of the kite-shaped ones.

Also in the White Tower was the Chapel of St. John the Evangelist, one of the first Norman churches built in England, and one of the finest examples of Romanist style in England. This was the Royal Chapel from the time of William the Conqueror until the time of Charles II, then it became a storehouse for records. Now it was being restored to some of its former glory.

After this we disappeared into the gift shops for an hour or two. I bought a book for myself and a few items for friends. I was finally dragged out by my Dad and we started to leave. On the way out Linda stopped to take some pictures and put her sunglasses on top of the wall along the edge of the castle. She leaned forward and they dropped into the moat. We would have left them there had they not been prescription sunglasses. So we got a warden to let my sister down into the moat to fetch them back. We stood above her and shouted to her, "Look, Linda's walking on water!" "Shut up, up there," she answered. This wasn't as fun as it could have been as the moat was long ago drained, filled in and grassed over.

We took a late lunch at a place called the Toby Tavern, sort of a yuppie bar and cafe, and it had good English food. After lunch we went back to the gift shop for another hour, then took the underground back to Victoria Station.

We cleaned up and took a taxi to the Adelphi Theater to see *Me and My Gal*, a 30's musical about a cockney who becomes an Earl. We all liked it as a silly and harmless sort of thing, but the music was good, especially the "Lambeth Walk." After the show we stopped at a pub and got drinks and a late snack while Bob told us stories of his trip to France and Belgium. We had to run to get the underground before it closed at 11:30, and dropped into our beds at the Elizabeth Hotel.

## Chapter 6: Tuesday

On Wednesday we again planned to go to both

Windsor and Hampton Court. We got a late breakfast and looked for the Windsor Express, a bus leaving at 10:00. Despite its name we made a dozen stops and a trip to change a driver during what seemed to be a very long time. With no air conditioning and windows which could not be opened, it was not a great experience. After our tenth stop, Dad leaned over and said, "I'm glad we took the express." Driving through London we saw some of Kensington and what we saw of the traffic made us even more determined to avoid driving in London. We also saw the London Sheraton Hotel, which has got to be the ugliest building in the city.

We finally reached Windsor, which is a small town on the side of a very steep hill, on which is a very big castle. The town was full of English tourist traps, which are shops that sell china, shops that sell wool stuff, and places that serve tea. Linda had missed breakfast so we stopped at the Windsor McDonald's so she could eat. I excused myself on the grounds that I had not come to England to eat at a McDonald's. (One note: all McDonald's in England are decorated to reflect the local history and this one had a plastic "stained glass" and tile look to give off a Victorian air.)

Windsor Castle is a huge place; there is no other way to describe it. Of course, they had 900 years in which to build it. The place was started by William the Conqueror as a hunting lodge/country house/private resort--a place to get away from it all--and they have been adding on to it ever since. There was a similar place built by the Saxon Kings down river a few miles away, but the Normans felt that the neighborhood was not completely safe. It was undamaged during the war because Hitler wanted to live there after he took over England.

We got into the Castle and found there were three major things to see: the State Apartments, Queen Mary's Dollhouse, and St. George's Chapel. Queen Mary's Dollhouse was something of a disappointment. Not that the item itself was lacking, but it was in a poor setting, a dark room poorly lit. You really couldn't get close enough to see anything well, especially with the elderly lady guides hissing at you not to lean on the glass. It was better to buy the book where you could get a better view of everything.

After watching a changing of the house guard, and getting a real good look at their automatic weapons, we took off to the State Apartments. These rooms were used for entertaining and special functions. If the Queen had been there, they would have been closed to the public. Some of these rooms were later destroyed in the Windsor fire in 1992.

Inside, after a security search, we walked up a staircase into the Imperial Room. This very small room at Windsor was full of war trophies, including the bullet that killed Lord Nelson and Napoleon's overcoat which was captured at Waterloo. One thing that did surprise me was the number of monuments to the battle of Waterloo. Up and down Great Britain my family would find "monuments to Waterloo" all over the place. I sort of expected that of WW I, which was a very hard time for England, but not the Napoleonic Wars.

We saw St. George's Hall which has all the Coats of Arms from the members of the Order of the Garter. Next door was the Queen's Presence Chamber where she sits on her throne. The Waterloo Chamber is a huge dining room done up as a monument to the participants of the Battle of Waterloo. There were a great number of private apartments and rooms that we didn't see. We were told that when she was here, the Queen lived just on the other side of the wall where we were standing. I saw some great art there, including Van Dyke's famous triple portrait of Charles I, and Rembrandt's picture of his mother. These two were hanging in a small bedroom and I could have reached out and touched them (I didn't, though). It was hard to remember that a family lived there. Can you imagine reading a newspaper in a room full of gold furniture? "William, don't play cricket inside the house!" \*Crash\* There goes a 400 year old vase.

After we saw the State Apartments, we checked out another gift shop and noticed a very pretty rose garden in the old moat of the keep of the castle. It was off limits to us, but we could look down and see the flowers very well. I spent too much in the gift shop, and had my family promise not to allow me inside (at least for this day).

We took a quick look at St. George's Chapel which was really nice. Several kings were buried there, including Henry VI, Edward III, George II, and Henry VIII. The last three Kings of England were also buried there, including George VI, the father of the present Queen. I guess I made an error when I asked one of the elderly lady guides if the Queen Mother was planning to be buried here. Here also is the tomb of Princess Charlotte, the only child of George IV. Had she not died in childbirth in 1817, Charlotte and not Victoria would have been Queen. Her tomb is rightly considered one of the finest art works of the period. There was also a collection of coats of arms of the current members of the Order of the Garter, and my sister and I drove one guide dizzy asking her questions about them. There was another gift/bookstore, but Linda

bravely threw herself across the doorway to block my way.

We then left the castle and went to two other museums in the town. The first one contained the royal coaches. The other was a collection of gifts that have been given to the Queen. If you ever wondered where she put that landscape made of seashells made by New Zealand schoolchildren, now you know.

By then we were getting very hungry, but most of the pubs closed from 3 to 5, and it was 4. We finally found a tearoom called the Newl Guyne, which was supposedly in the same house where the original [owner?] would meet with Charles II. You can even eat in the same room where they did the "wild thing". Tea was being served, but we held out for lunch and got some. We had missed the last bus to London, so we took the train.

British Rail is very nice and I am sorry that we didn't do more traveling by train. We arrived at Victoria Station in the middle of rush hour, but got back to the hotel okay.

We cleaned up and started to walk to a place called the Marquis of Westminster, a local pub with a restaurant in the basement. We had asked people at the B&B where to eat. They asked what type of food we were looking for and we said, "English." It was beginning to rain when we left and was pouring by the time we had walked the three blocks to the pub. We were all soaking wet, but were well cared for by the staff. It was great English food, and I learned to like a lemon peel in my warm Coke. Back at the B&B, Linda taught us all a card game called Skip-Ro. Partnered with my Dad, we won two games and lost two before turning in around midnight.

## Chapter 7: Thursday Hampton Court Palace

The next day was bright and sunny (the first such day for us in England). Two of us managed to get down to breakfast. Around ten we caught the bus for Hampton Court. This ride was much nicer, about half as long as yesterday's, and not as many stops. We got there around eleven and used our National Trust passes to get in. We took a look at the Tudor kitchens at Hampton Court, a new exhibit there. This tour was great, and the pre-recorded tape very good. The tour was also free. (A note about the tapes. These pre-recorded tapes could be found at most sites and were well worth the cost. They help us appreciate what we saw.) You could also

take pictures on this tour, something you couldn't do on most of the others. Unhappily my camera's battery decided to quit just as we got started.

We saw the rest of the Palace, including the Great Hall, the King's Guard Room, and Henry VIII's Chapel. These rooms were the only Tudor (i.e., medieval) rooms there. The rest of the State apartments were mainly Stuart and Georgian (what we Americans call Colonial). The King's Apartments had been damaged by fire in 1986 and were still undergoing repair. I got in trouble for taking a photo out of a window using my sister's camera, but they didn't take the film.

We had a late lunch in the tiltyard garden (which had a gift shop in it). The service was awful, but the food was good. I had my first taste of bread pudding, which was a bit like baked custard.

A look at Henry VIII's Tennis Court was followed by a walk through the gardens which were worth the trip in themselves. I was surprised by the number of flowers still blooming in mid-August, and more than once put my head into a hedge of lavender to take a smell. We watched the ducks in the ponds and walked by the fountains.

Hampton Court Palace was very nice but except for the kitchens and gardens, you couldn't take any pictures. I stopped again by the garden store and bought a teacher's pack for an SCA friend. I saw some CDs of medieval music in the main gift shop, but since I didn't have a player, I did not buy them.

We missed the bus back to London so my family and I waited for about an hour until the next one came along. I was fighting off an oncoming head cold and I was tired. I had seen the English custom of laying down on the grass and sleeping in the park. I saw a jogger throw himself down and sleep, and I said, "I can do that too." So I got up and walked to the park behind the bus stop and dozed for about an hour. It really helped me and I felt much better afterward.

When we got back to the B&B, we had to change very quickly and make our way to the Theater Royal to see *Miss Saigon*. I was feeling lousy and would have gone to bed but everyone pushed me to go. I really didn't like the play and the rest of the family only thought it was okay. After that, we walked around the area looking for some place to eat and found that there were huge crowds in the street. I was surprised that on a weekday there would be so many people out. It looked like fun, but Dad was worried about the crowds and we finally found a place that would still take new customers. After we ate, we headed back to the underground (with about a hundred teenagers).

## Chapter 8: Friday

### From St. Paul's Cathedral to the British Museum

The next day we all slept in, including my sister who missed breakfast. I took a quick trip down to the neighborhood library and was surprised to find that it was still using the Dewey Decimal system. There were lots of American literature books and they put their biographies in the 920's rather than by the person's last name. I had expected to see the British Library Classification.

I returned to the B&B and found that we were traveling to St. Paul's Cathedral. We got on the underground and went to the St. Paul exit which unloaded us right next to another shop. We bought some t-shirts and postcards. I liked a certain t-shirt which listed certain things to see in London, including "Rain" and "More Rain". I discovered that right next door was a Nippon Bookstore. Nippon Books is the publisher of Japanese books in either English or Japanese. I went in to see if they had anything on the Japanese Tea Ceremony and to try out my self-taught Japanese. My family hurried after me and Linda bet me £5 that I wouldn't leave without buying something. I did manage to get out without buying anything, but she refused to pay up.

St. Paul's Cathedral was right next door and it was BIG!! I mean *really* big. So big that you have to walk down the block just to get a picture of the stairs. It's huge with gold mosaics. Behind the main altar is a chapel in memory of all the American soldiers killed in WW II. There are steps to the top of the dome and down to the crypt. Like Westminster Abbey, this church is packed full of English heroes. Christopher Wren, Horatio Nelson, Alexander Fleming and the Duke of Wellington were all there. There was also a huge monument to General "Chinese" Gordon, even though his body was never found. On the hour a Deacon came up and offered prayers, and announced that there would be an organ concert. So, for a half hour we listened to an American Minister of Music from San Francisco play the great organ in St. Paul's, which was very nice.

We walked to Trafalgar Square and it looked as if every tourist in the world was there. Nelson's Column was in the middle of the Square and tourists were placing their children on one of the three lions at the base and taking pictures. After a wait we got Linda and Bob to go up there. While waiting I noticed that there was a statue of George Washington in front of the National Portrait Gallery. No one

believed me later when I told them there was a statue of George Washington in London.

Dad noticed a church and looked closely at the name. Then he came over and told me that it was St. Martin in the Fields. I was surprised because I had heard of the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, and expected it to be a small music college in the country, and here it was, a church in the middle of London! The Academy of St. Martin in the Fields is one of the biggest recorders of classical music in the world.

We took a double decker bus from Trafalgar Square to Charing Cross--you could always tell the Americans, they are the ones who sit up top even if they are only one stop away from where they are to get off. There we stopped for lunch at a Pizza Hut. Bob and Linda were going through pizza-withdrawal. The English did a real good job with the pizza, which was served with hot tea.

We decided to walk to Piccadilly Circus, which was a bad idea since it was uphill all the way. Piccadilly Circus was busy; it seemed to be the hangout for every teenager in Europe. I wanted to see the Statue of Eros, and I did...covered up with plywood and scaffolding. Well, I guessed that London, like many US cities, has two seasons: winter and construction.

We grabbed another double decker bus and rode to the British Museum. We had decidedly stayed away from the Museum on days of poor weather but that day was sunny and warm, and we all hoped that the crowds would be somewhere else. We were wrong. It was wall-to-wall people, plus the upper story was lighted by big skylights which let in lots of light...and heat. There was no air conditioning. It was the first place I felt oppressed by the crowds.

Dad wanted to see the Egyptian collection and after getting through the security checkpoint, we ran to the Egyptian wing. I wanted to see if they had some medieval furniture. It was ten minutes to closing so I asked a guard, who said that people in England didn't have any furniture until the Tudor period. I was a bit surprised by that remark, as it was certainly wrong, but I didn't stay to argue with him as they were turning off the lights. Our family ran (with about 200 other people) for the front door, but I was stopped by the sight of the Research Library (unhappily you have to write to them before you come if you want to use or see it), and the gift shop. I dove into the bookstore/gift shop but there was no time to browse before we were herded out by the clerks. That's the British Museum in 20 minutes or less. The family was really surprised

that I hadn't bought anything in the store.

We started back to our little B&B right at the start of rush hour. It was a long hot trip, the only really unpleasant one we had. Once we got back, we rested and then got ready for a dinner at the *Hispaniol*, a ship now docked at Westminster Pier as a restaurant. It specialized in seafood, but most of us ordered the peppercorn steak. It was a good place to eat, but somehow it wasn't the best. We gossiped about the Royal Family and Bob said that he believed that the chances of the monarchy surviving till Prince William came to the throne were only 50-50. This was before all the big scandals came along. We watched the Thames at night, and eventually returned to the hotel to sleep. We picked up a taxi to get back, and while Dad videotaped night scenes of London, Linda and I discussed American politics. So when we watched the video of our trip, there was this long argument about the Republicans with it.

## Chapter 9: Saturday Around London and the Theater

Saturday was our last full day in London, and we wanted to make it special. After a late start, we went to the Tourist Information Center in Victoria Station. It was very crowded. Dad and Linda stood in line for theater tickets while I took a last look at the bookstore. Linda and Dad were trying for *Phantom of the Opera* tickets. The people just laughed and told them, "Not for love of money." They got tickets for *The Mousetrap* instead. They also got tickets for the double decker bus tour, which we decided to take in order to pick up on anything we had missed.

As time passed while I was in the bookstore, I waited to see if the line at the register would get any shorter over time. It didn't, so I got in line behind a family from Spain who didn't understand English, and the clerk who didn't speak Spanish, was trying to explain that the videotap would work in their VCR at home. I want to say that all the tourist people did a real good job. Often they looked tired and very frazzled, but they were professional enough never to snap or yell at people, even though they sometimes looked like they wanted to fall over. Many of them really earned their pay that month.

In order to catch anything that we might have missed, we took the double decker bus tour. About 80% we had already seen, but we learned some new things, like the fact that London was really made up of many cities, and that the "City" London is only

about 5 square miles. Most of the tourist stuff (except for the Tower and St. Paul's) is in Westminster (a nearby town). London, in fact, is made up of office and bank buildings, and looks like the downtown section of any American city. About 7 million people work in London; only 55,000 live there. They also had tiny one-lane streets between some of the buildings; they weren't alleyways, but the remnants of the medieval streets of London. We saw the Life Guards quarters, 10 Downing Street, and the College of Arms (the building where the English Heralds meet). I wanted to stop the bus and check out the Herald's College, but the rest of the family said no. Besides, I hadn't done the family research I had wanted to do before going to the College, nor did I have the book titles that I wanted to consult. Oh well, maybe next trip.

After the tour we went to the Sherlock Holmes Tavern right off of Trafalgar Square for lunch. As a dedicated Sherlock Holmes fan, I was really looking forward to going. It was a real disappointment. We all had second thoughts about eating there after we saw it was part tourist trap and part local bar, with a fair number of blokes enjoying their lunch. Upstairs was the restaurant, which we barely got into. One waitress (with home made tattoos) was running the whole room and she was quite busy. The reconstruction of Sherlock Holmes' room was also a disappointment and quite a bit run down.

We had no plans for the afternoon, so everyone could do what they wanted. My brother was not feeling well so he went back to the B&B to rest. Dad and Linda went to Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum, and I went to the Museum of London. This was a very good choice and I highly recommend it. It was a bit of a walk to the Barricade Center in the city of London. London was completely empty on a Saturday afternoon, and I first got lost before I finally found the place. I had no trouble there, except when I nearly fell down the stairs looking for the Ladies Room.

The Museum of London was a great place: free, modern, and air-conditioned, which was very nice in mid-August. This Museum looked at the history of London from it's pre-human beginnings to the present day. There were two special exhibits: one was a photo-history of the London Blitz, and the other was a collection of jewelry from Roman London to today. *You could take pictures here!*

In their "garden", they had a piece of the Roman wall that once encircled Roman London (the other end of which is in the Tower of London courtyard). In one of the towers the archaeologists found the remains of a Roman coin counterfeiting

workshop. They had medieval music in the gift shop (which I unwisely did not buy there), and they had an exhibit of medieval furniture (I took lots of pictures). In all it was a very nice place. If you get a chance, go there and have a good time. Dad and Linda liked their tour, but found it rather touristy.

I took the underground to Victoria Station and walked back to the B&B. After everyone had about an hour's sleep, we got up and dressed for *The Mousetrap*, which was at the Matin Theater. It was pretty good, and even Linda liked it.

Before the performance began, I met a Californian real estate agent and his wife. He talked about how the land in London is getting so expensive that the theaters are having a hard time to keep from losing out to developers who would like to build office buildings and collect ten times in rent. This was a subject that kept coming up time and time again in London and it's a real problem. From an antiquarian point of view, you don't tear down buildings that

have historical value, but in a place like London, that is nearly every building. Compared to central Florida where the historical societies were trying to save a hotel that was only 70 years old, the idea that you can just tear down something that had been standing for 300 years was just beyond understanding.

From reading our theater programs we found out about a place called Chicago Meatpackers. We found it after the show and had dinner there. It was very good and had a nice atmosphere. The English cooks did very well at American cooking. Back to the B&B to turn in, with an early rise tomorrow. Sunday would be an early day for everyone: breakfast, a quick packing, and Dad running to get the rental car. By the time he returned we had everything packed. It was quite a lot, but we managed to get it all crammed into the car, and we were off.

[Elizabeth's trip will be concluded in the next issue of *Lan's Lantern*. --Lan] [\*]

## It All Started with... a Jerk, a Pat, a Hiccup, and an Old Air Conditioner

### The History of *Electrical Eggs*

by Samantha b Jeudé

The jerk was a surgeon's fumble that exposed my spine, or the alleged fan who put his elbow into it, take your pick. Either way, it meant I spent much of *Iguanacon* in a wheelchair. There was only one other fan there in a wheelchair -- John Platt, who'd had knee surgery -- and we both agreed that "you can't really attend a Con in a wheelchair."

So the seed was planted.

I had no time to do more than think about the seed, being too busy keeping a hippie commune afloat on my single wage. But the idea stuck in my mind as I met other fans with physical limitations, among them Esther Breslau and her husband Michael. We four decided to watch how the concept of "Handicapped Access" was growing -- and it was. Handicapped, that is.

When things got to the point of a younger person patting Esther on the head and telling her "Don't worry, I'll take care of you," we decided it

was time to quit being patronized and start being patrons. Esther, Michael, my husband Don Cook, and I came up with a 4-page set of guidelines for Access, artist friend P. Jack Meacham drew up our Access User & Helper logos -- and the seed was sprouting.

In 1985, we decided to test our ideas at *Chili-con*, the Texas NASFiC, which I was to run. Then I started using a MobieUs (a three-wheeler) and Esther had to wrestle things into shape. Once was enough for her; she came back with plenty of suggestions, an eager convert, Carol Johnson, and the pleas, "Don't make me do this again!" Three years and cons later, I was "retired" from the actual running myself; I have a lovely silver pin to prove it!

So we polished up the idea (now a good 20 pages of ideas), I tackled doing Access for *Confederation*, and the organization was born.



Now that our baby was born (so to speak), we had to christen it. Yough job: the name had to be slightly humorous, unique, and it had to provoke the question, "What is that?!!!" While wrestling with the conundrum with Murray Porath, a friend who's also a lawyer, I mentioned that I was "adjusting to my new electric legs." But I had the hiccups, the words came out scrambled, and Donald pounced. "Electric, uh, legs -- Electrical Eggs. Good Name?"

Murray agreed, and I followed suit. For better or worse, our Handicapped Access outfit was named.

Eggs' debut at **Confederation** was a rousing success -- and, when **Confederation** announced its plan to disburse funds to worthy organizations, Eggs was the first to get the nod. They gave us fund to start up the organization, buy the needed equipment, and file for our Non-Profit status. Electrical Eggs, Ltd. was officially launched in August, 1987, complete with How-To Handbook, (explaining the system), personnel, and, the goofy titles. I had foolishly signed myself as "EggHead" on our grant request to **Confederation**. When Esther and Michael saw it, they announced that they would be "Egg Visor" and "Eggs-asperator". In vain I sought protection from this "punishment" from Murray, who replied that he was the "Legal Egggle", and that was that.

We repeated our Access at **CactusCon** and **NOLACon**, both co-headed by Carol and me. In the meantime, seeing the need for a computer and other equipment, the Board of Directors -- Esther, Carol and I -- tried to figure out how to raise funds. The Non-Profit filing was in limbo, and none of us could bankroll everything Eggs needed...

...which is when we discovered a T-shirt shop set up to Eggs' Post Office. Donald and I needed to unload an air conditioner we'd gotten for an earlier residence, and they needed an a/c. But they were cash-poor...would we be willing to barter it to them for T-shirts?

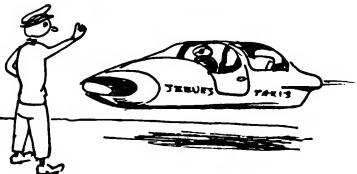
With artwork from Mary Hanson-Roberts, we decided "Yes!". A month later, Frank Kelly Freas and his wife Laura joined Eggs and gave us the permission (and plates for) his beautiful poster, "The Egg". They also presented us with the "goofy eggs" that are our corporate insignia. Later we had the artwork of Hannah Shapero, Joan Hanke-Woods, Cheryl Mandus, and Phil Foglio to grace our yearly T-shirts, and "Wheelie the Access Dragon" by Nancy Janda (an adult and a children's design), but "the Kelly shirt" is still the one we're most recognized for (although this year's design by David

Cherry may change that...).

Having proved Eggs could handle a 4,000+ fan convention, we decided to expand to smaller cons. Marilyn Teague (née White) took to Eggs like a duck to water, adding new ideas and inspiring Atlanta cons with her diligence and ability. As Eggs grew, we began to add State Agents -- working members of Eggs who contact the Cons in their states and offer to run the Eggs System for what has become our "standard fee": nothing, or "a table where Sam can take donations and promote Eggs". Original Agents Robert and Marilyn Teague in Georgia, Marcia Kelly McCoy in Tennessee, and Lee Wygand in California were a problem only in containment -- i.e., they came up with more good ideas and working suggestions that the Handbook (by then in its Second Printing) became sadly out of date!

So what is Eggs doing today? Marcia Kelly McCoy -- who did a superlative job if running Access as **MagiCon** in Orlando -- is working on two easy-to-use versions (Bare Minimum and Full Services) of the Handbook. We've added more agents -- Bill "S" Anders for Alabama, Jack Heazkitt for Kentucky, Alisa Cohen for Indiana, Becca Price for Michigan -- and are still expanding. Floating Agent Thea (she keeps *Moving*) has come up with a Chocolate Eggscursion and other brainstorms to raise money. John Platt, Narcia McCoy, and Thea have joined the Board, and Carol has left Eggs. Each day we get a little closer to my dream: that one day what Eggs does as an "extra service" will become common con practice. Someday, Eggs will no longer be needed -- and, with great joy, we will close our tents and vanish into the night, glad to have done A Good Thing and gladder to be able to just go to a Con and enjoy it.

To contact Electrical Eggs, write to:  
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# A BRIEF FILMOGRAPHY OF ARTHURIAN FILMS

by Mark R. Leeper

- *Adventures of Sir Galahad* (1949): Directed by Spencer G. Bennet. Starring George Reeves and Lois Hall. Serial.
- *Arthur the King* (1985): Directed by Clive Donner. Starring Malcolm McDowell (King Arthur), Candice Bergen (Morgan Le Fay), Edward Woodward, Dyan Cannon, Lucy Gutteridge, Joseph Blatchely, Rupert Everett. Made for CBS television. Cannon falls down a rabbit hole in Stonehenge to get to Camelot.
- *Black Knight* (1954): Directed by Tay Garnett. Starring Alan Ladd, Patricia Medina, Peter Cushing, Andre Morell, Anthony Bushell (King Arthur), and Jean Lodge (Guinevere). A blacksmith's son becomes a mysterious knight.
- *Black Shield of Falworth* (1954): Directed by Rudolph Mate. Starring Tony Curtis, Janet Leigh, and David Farrar. Based on Howard Pyle's *Men of Iron*. ("Yonda lies da castle of my fodda.")
- *Camelot* (1967): Directed by Joshua Logan. Starring Richard Harris (King Arthur), Vanessa Redgrave (Guenevere), Franco Nero (Sir Lancelot), Laurence Naismith (Merlin), David Hemmings (Mordred). Musical by Lerner and Lowe, based on the T. H. White novel *The Once and Future King*.
- *Camelot* (1982): Filmed version of the stage play, shown on HBO. Starring Richard Burton (King Arthur).
- *A Connecticut Yankee* (1931): Directed by David Butler. Starring Will Rogers (Hank/Sir Boss), William Farnum (King Arthur), Myrna Loy (Queen Morgan Le Fay) Mitchell Harris (Merlin). Based on the Mark Twain novel.
- *Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court, A* (1920): Directed by Emmett J. Flynn. Starring Harry C. Myers (the Yankee), Charles Clary (King Arthur), Rosemary Theby (Queen Morgan La Fay), Wilfred McDonald (Lancelot), William V. Wong (Merlin). Based on the Mark Twain novel.
- *Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, A* (1949): Directed by Tay Garnett. Starring Bing Crosby (Hank Martin), Sir Cedric Hardwicke (King Arthur), Virginia Field (Morgan LeFay), Murvyn Vye (Merlin). Musical version based on the Mark Twain novel.
- *L'Eternel Retour* (1943): Directed by Jean Delannoy. Starring Jean Marais and Madeleine Sologne. Screenplay by Jean Cocteau. The story of Tristan and Isolde in a modern setting. Also known as *The Eternal Return* and *Love Eternal*.
- *Excalibur* (1981): Directed by John Boorman. Starring Nigel Terry (Arthur Pendragon), Cherie Lunghi (Guenevere), Nicholas Clay (Lancelot), Robert Addie (Mordred), Helen Mirren (Morgana), Nicole Williamson (Merlin). A very Germanic interpretation of Arthur with a little Siegfried mixed in.
- *Feuer und Schwert* (1981): Directed by Veith von Furstenberg. The story of Tristan and Isolde.
- *King Arthur, the Young Warlord* (1975): Directed by Sidney Hayers, Patrick Jackson, and Peter Sasdy. Starring Oliver Tobias (King Arthur). Series made for HTV Ltd., and later condensed to feature-length film.
- *Knightriders* (1981): Directed by George Romero. Starring Ed Harris (Billy/Arthur), Amy Ingersoll (Linet/Guenevere), Gary Lahti (Alan Lancelot), Tom Savini (Morgan), Brother Blue (Merlin). Arthur story retold set in a sort of SCA-on-motorcycles traveling fair.



- *Knights of the Round Table* (1953): Directed by Richard Thorpe. Starring Mel Ferrer (King Arthur), Ava Gardner (Guinevere), Robert Taylor (Lancelot), Stanley Baker (Mordred), Anne Crawford (Morgan LeFay), Felix Aylmer (Merlin). MGM's first Cinemascope film.
- *Lancelot and Elaine* (1910):
- *Lancelot du Lac* (1974): Directed by Robert Bresson. Starring Vladimir Antolek-Oreshek (King Arthur), Laura Duke Condominas (Guinevere), and Luc Simon (Lancelot). Winner of the International Critics Prize at Cannes.
- *Legend of King Arthur* (1974): Directed by Rodney Bennett. Starring Andrew Burt (King Arthur), Felicity Dean (Guinevere), David Robb (Lancelot), Maureen O'Brien (Morgan Le Fay), and Robert Eddison (Merlin). Made for BBC television and shown in the United States on PBS.
- "Last Defender of Camelot" (1986): Episode of the *New Twilight Zone*. Based on the Roger Zelazny short story.
- *Lovespell* (1979): Directed by Tom Donovan. Starring Richard Burton, Kate Mulgrew, Nicholas Clay, Cyril Cusack. Also shown as *Tristan and Isolde*.
- *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (1975): Directed by Terry Gilliam and Terry Jones. Starring Graham Chapman (King Arthur), John Cleese (Lancelot), Terry Gilliam, Eric Idle, Michael Palin, Terry Jones.
- *Parsifal* (1904): Directed by Edwin S. Porter. Edison production.
- *Parsifal* (1912): Italian.
- *Parsifal* (1951): Directed by Daniel Mangrane and Carlos Serrano de Osma. Starring Ludmilla Tcherna and Gustavo Rojo. Based on the Opera by Richard which was based on the epic *Parsifal* by Wolfram Von Eschenbach. Also known as *The Evil Forest*.
- *Parsifal* (1981): Directed by Hans Jürgen P. Syberberg.
- *Perceval le Gallois* (1978): Directed by Eric Rohmer. Starring Fabrice Luchini (Perceval), Mark Eyraud (King Arthur), and Marie Christine Barrault (Guinevere). Based on Chretien de Troyes's poem.
- *Prince Valiant* (1954): Directed by Henry Hathaway. Starring Brian Aherne (King Arthur), Jarma Lewis (Guinevere), and Don Megowan (Lancelot). Based on Hal Foster's comic strip.
- *Siege of the Saxons, The* (1954): Directed by Hathan Juran. Starring Mark Dignam (King Arthur), John Laurie (Merlin) and Janette Scott.
- *Sword in the Stone, The* (1963): Directed by Wolfgang Reithermann. Animated; voices by Ricky Sorensen (Wart), Karl Swenson (Merlin), Sebastian Cabot (Sir Ector). Based on the T. H. White novel.
- *Sword of Lancelot* (1982): Directed by Cornel Wilde. Starring Brian Aherne (King Arthur), Jean Wallace (Guinevere) Cornel Wilde (Lancelot). Also known as *Lancelot and Guinevere*.
- *Sword of the Valiant* (1982): Directed by Stephen Weeks. Starring Miles O'Keefe and Sean Connery. The story of Gowain and the Green Knight.
- *Tristan et Iseult* (199972): Directed by Jean Lagrange.
- *Unidentified Flying Oddball* (1979): Directed by Russ Mayberry. Starring Dennis Dugan (Tom Trimble), Kenneth More (King Arthur), Jim Dale (Sir Mordred), Ron Moody (Merlin). Also known as *The Spaceman and King Arthur*. [1]



# Christian Publishing SF/F

by Maureen O'Brien

In 1986, the advent on the bestseller lists of Frank L. Peretti's *This Present Darkness* changed the face of the SF/F market. For the first time, SF/F is coming in quantity from a source other than the magazines, the SF/F lines, and the occasional mainstream oddity. The independent Christian publishing houses have found out that fantasy and science fiction are not only good venues for making a point, but that Christian SF/F will be bought and enjoyed by households which hardly know the regular market exists.

Peretti did not create this subgenre. There has always been a thin trickle from Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, McDonald's unique and beautiful fantasies, C. S. Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia*, *Screwtape Letters* and *Space* trilogy, Charles Williams' supernatural thrillers, James Blish's *After All Knowledge* cycle of novels (*Doctor Mirabilis*, *Black Easter*, *The Day After Judgment*, *A Case of Conscience*), Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, Madeleine L'Engle's *Time Between the Stars* series, and Andrew Greeney's SF and fantasy novels. But Christian publishers' new affection for SF/F appears to have begun with Peretti and *This Present Darkness*.

Frank E. Peretti is a fundamentalist minister and writer. He began his writing career by writing radio plays for a Christian radio station. [*Tilly* is a novelization of one of these plays.] His first novel, *This Present Darkness* (1986), was a supernatural thriller which dramatized the conflict between good and evil as interpreted by fundamentalist theology. An ordinary town is assaulted by demons and their unwitting human allies, as angels and good humans attempt to counter them. This leads to a multileveled conflict as demons attack human minds, human prayers strengthen angels, and unwitting humans try to do what is right despite incredible opposition with no rational source. The sequel, *Piercing the Darkness* (1989), was more of the same. In these two books, Peretti's style was not as good as his plots and characters. However, the power of the story itself created a marketing niche for other writers and got his picture in *People* magazine.

His next few books were written much more skillfully. His first mature work, the short novel *Til-*

*ly* (1988), was reminiscent of a gentle episode of *The Twilight Zone*. It begins in a cemetery; a married couple sees a strange woman leaving flowers at a baby's grave which bears only the name "Tilly". The couple is strangely fascinated by this woman and child. The husband makes inquiries and learns that the woman is not Tilly's mother, but the nurse who attended her abortion. Meanwhile, the wife sees Tilly as a child playing with other children, and learns that Tilly is her daughter. The book ends in forgiveness and reconciliation. It is written beautifully and tenderly, which came as a complete surprise after the unpolished style of his first two novels. I was unable to read Peretti's children's series *Cooper Family Adventures* (1990) as they were continually checked out. Obviously someone likes them.

Peretti's latest work is *Prophet* (1993), in which a news anchor and his co-workers confront the border between news and truth during a controversial gubernatorial campaign. Peretti is both critical of and knowledgeable about the media and political public relations. His picture of how local news broadcasts are put together was as nuts-and-bolts as Tom Clancy's submarines. However, he also envisions the media as being called to fulfill the same function that the prophets did in ancient Israel: to confront society with its moral short-comings and show them the consequences of such a course. He emphasizes this point by actually investing an anchorman with prophetic powers. However, most of the action takes place in the ordinary world, as the anchorman attempts to find the courage to support a reporter in her quest to get her stories on the air against the opposition of station management, while dealing with the death of his activist father and trying to find common ground with his estranged son. *Prophet* deserves its bestseller status.

Roger Elwood is the second big name in the Christian SF/Fantasy market. As you may be aware, Roger Elwood began his career as an SF writer and editor of the seventies who achieved some note and considerable controversy; most libraries have some of his 200 anthologies on the shelves. At any rate, Elwood gaffed. Eventually he became a



Christian SF/Fantasy writer.

*Angelwalk* (1988) was his first major work. It is the story of Darien, an angel who questions whether Lucifer should have been thrown out of Heaven. God allows Darien to go to Earth and see what Lucifer and his followers are doing. Lucifer tries to recruit Darien and Darien tries to decide which side is right. The heart of the book is Darien's encounters with various fallen angels who used to be his friends. The most sympathetic character is Observer, an angel who didn't choose to rebel against God but went along with Lucifer anyway. *Angelwalk* was immediately acclaimed in the Christian market as a classic.

Elwood wrote two companion books. *Fallen Angel* (1990), the story of Observer, was well received, as was *Stedfast: Guardian Angel* (1992), which in my opinion is the best-written of the three. Each book stands on its own, and all are written in a unique mixture of anecdotes and essays. His angels are very different from the warrior angels of the Peretti novels or the conventional angel portrayals. He emphasizes the joy and pain the angels (even the fallen ones) feel. As Elwood puts it in *Stedfast*, "Human beings are promised a Heaven without tears, without pain...but that is not the case for angels." Instead, he pictures them working and waiting for such joy. This attitude allows Elwood to give his angels and demons more mental conflict than one usually sees in descriptions of advanced beings.

Elwood's other Christian SF and fantasy novels are written in a more conventional style. *Children of the Furor* (1990) is a near-future tale about neo-Nazism. *The Christening* (1990) is about fundamentalist Islam and the rediscovery of Eden. *The Wandering* (1992) is an odd tale about an alien's struggle against evil on his own planet, his reluctant escape into space, his discovery that there is evil even on the most peaceful planet, and Mormonism. As you can tell, Elwood likes to pack plenty of top-

ics into his books.

Roger Elwood is a much better writer than he used to be. His writing has gained a power and beauty that I never dreamed possible for him. He is a very tough critic of the world, including his fellow Christians and the Christian publishing empires. He has good characters and intriguing plots and situations.

However, his criticism is sometimes rather harsh. His tolerance for other religions and even other Christian denominations is not great. He never shows bigotry toward members of such religions; his attacks are purely theological ones. Since theological attacks are an assault on beliefs, however, it is not an approach calculated to endear him to readers not of his sect. His first few books were heavy-handed; he has now grown more subtle. His open and undisguised opposition may make even Christian readers uncomfortable if they do not agree with his sect's theology. To be fair, however, he is not writing for those who disagree; he is writing to challenge and inspire his particular group of faithful.

The third big name in the Christian SF/Fantasy is Steven R. Lawhead. Lawhead began as a freelance writer of advice books, but began writing children's fantasy novels adapted from stories he told his children. He has only gradually gained the skills of a professional writer.

The *Dragon King Trilogy* [*In the Hall of the Dragon King* (1982), *The Warlords of Nin* (1983), and *The Sword and the Flame* 1984] is better understood when one knows this. What is impossible to understand is that these novels were actually bought as is by any publisher, however small and Christian (and are now being reprinted by Avon). The plot is not too bad, and the main characters are all right. But as with Peretti, the writing style of Lawhead's first few novels is a poor match for the scope of his ideas. In the first novel, for example, an evil sorcerer says "Ha, ha, ha! Hee, hee, hee!" continually. It gets on the nerves. The best part of this trilogy is Lawhead's portrayal of an ancient city being excavated and rebuilt by followers of the ancient people's "God Most High", and the growth of the protagonist, Quintin.

Lawhead next tried his hand at science fiction. I was unable to obtain a copy of *Dream Thief* (1983), but his duology *The Empyrian Saga* [*The Search for Fierra* (1985) and *The Siege of Dome* (1986)] was an intriguing and original work from an obviously fanish heart. A historian is sent to a remote megacorporate colony on the planet Empyryon, to investigate what has been going on since

they ceased FTL transmissions. After an interestingly described journey through a wormhole, the historian and his companions (a Finnish physicist and a telepath) find that, after a few millennia of independent development, the colony city (now called Dome) has evolved a complex culture of hierarchical guilds, the leaders of which strive to control the city and each other. As the expedition from Earth tries desperately to make sense of Dome and survive in it, they learn that there is another colony on Empyrian: a city named Fierra, founded by dissidents of Dome. Over the millennia, there has been a pattern of warfare between Dome and Fierra, yet the leaders of Dome do not choose to believe that Fierra exists. The strange rivalry between two cities designed to be utopias was intriguing, as was the struggle of the Earth expedition to learn the true situation and determine where they should stand. The details and subplots were also interesting. (I particularly enjoyed Lawhead's statements on creativity during the second book.) However, a good editor would have helped the books greatly.

Lawhead's next work was *The Pendragon Cycle* (*Talesin* (1987), *Merlin* (1988), and *Arthur* (1989)). These books are Lawhead's first fully mature work, the first distributed to regular bookstores and the first to be reprinted by Avon's Nova line. This series was also the beginning of a new chapter in his personal life, as he moved from Kansas to Oxford, England, to do the necessary Arthurian research, and apparently faced accusations from the Christian publishing world that he had sold out by crossing over to mainstream publishers.

In reality, *The Pendragon Cycle* is not radically different from Lawhead's previous books; it is a culmination of the themes he covered in all of them. On a minor level, Lawhead's love of the Arthur legends was evident in *The Dragon King Trilogy*, with its knights, shining swords and quests (though he avoided shameless copying of the plot). On a higher level, Lawhead's vision of the Arthurian world is one where Christian and pagan meet more amicably than not, a world where Christianity is the fulfillment of pagan dreams and ideals.

This is especially well done in *Talesin*, the first (and in my opinion, best) of the three. In this novel, both the Atlantean woman Charis (from a heavily Cretan and Platonic Atlantis) and the British poet Talesin are searching for something to believe while their worlds (Atlantis and post-Roman Britain) are falling apart. Throughout *Talesin*, Lawhead adds witty and original interpretations to his respectful treatment of traditional material. The Mabonion story of how finding Talesin changed his

adopted father's luck is lovingly retold. The fall of Atlantis is based both on the story in Plato and the legends of Lyonesse. The surviving Atlanteans are thought by the Britons to be Sidhe, and their crippled lord's favorite recreation begins the legend of the Fisher King. This novel is made especially interesting by Lawhead's challenge to the standard interpretation of the poems traditionally attributed to Taliesin. He proposes (through the story) that the Christian portions of these poems are not necessarily the intrusive work of a monkish compiler, but rather the attempt of a poet converted to Christianity and attempting to reconcile his two worlds. It could also be taken as a statement of Lawhead's objective in the series.

*Merlin* and *Arthur* are less original, mainly because there have recently been so many Arthurian novels set in post-Roman Britain. It is particularly unlucky for Lawhead that his *Merlin* novel was so heavily influenced by Tolstoy's nonfiction book *The Search for Merlin*, because Tolstoy subsequently released his own *Merlin* novel. (I read Tolstoy's novel earlier, but Lawhead published first.) However, Lawhead's *Merlin* is both more sensible and more human than Tolstoy's novel version. *Merlin*'s madness is particularly effective, as is his portrayal of Merlin as a warrior-lord as well as a bard and prophet. But it is difficult to read *Merlin* fairly after covering the same ground with different writers so many times before.

*Arthur* retells the Matter of Britain itself, so the problem is a hundred times worse. No one encounters Arthur for the first time anymore; we see him through the mists of movies and books as well as the *Mabonion* and *Le Morte d'Arthur*. But Lawhead carries this burden as honestly and well as anyone, bringing the story back to its British beginnings. Gwenhwyvar is no betrayer here, and the great quest which destroys Arthur's court is not the Grail but the re-establishment of the Empire. Lawhead's treatment of the tomb of Arthur and his Round Table is unique. But in the end, the matter of Britain triumphs over the mind of the writer, because it is just too much for any one writer to master. Arthurian writers are measured by their stature in defeat; Lawhead stands tall.

Lawhead decided to stay in England and work on research for another series (*Song of Albion*), but meanwhile he had to live. So he went to his new English Christian publisher and started a very interesting series for children, *The Riverbank Stories*. These were all to be set along Oxford rivers and have Christian themes. So far I have only been able to read the first one, *The Tale of Jeremy Vole*. It is



heavily influenced by Beatrix Potter and *The Wind in the Willows*. However, the story of a shy vole who is told by the Great Blue Heron that a flood is coming and his attempts to warn the peoples of the Riverbank is distinctly Lawhead. One doesn't normally find too many children's books talking about the difficulties of predicting trouble, the fact that those who listen and believe can be as much trouble as those who don't, and the way people sometimes blame the successful predictor for what went wrong. All in all, it was a very charming and challenging story about prophecy.

Finally, Lawhead's current series is *Song of Albion*. The first volume, *The Paradise War* came out in 1991 in hardback from the English publishers and was reprinted by Avon in 1992; *The Silver Hand* was in hardback late in 1992 and in paperback in 1993; the third book has not come out at this writing. In *The Paradise War* it is obvious that Lawhead's writing has now gone from the mature professional level to something better still. An American at Oxford and his English roommate find a door from our world into a Celtic world. That is standard enough, but what Lawhead does with the situation is beautiful. Lawhead's treatment of traditional stories is again loving and learned, but he is not reluctant to make them his own. Unfortunately, he chose to tell the story in first person from the protagonist's point of view. Since the protagonist doesn't know what's going on and spends a lot of time disbelieving the situation, this is a problem. *The Silver Hand* switched to the first person POV of the bard in the story, as he accompanied our hero on his wanderings and helped him to become a rebel leader and a king. Since he was very knowledgeable and had scars of flaws, the bard was a more entertaining narrator. The plot was fairly original and the poetry lovely. If Lawhead can continue the intensity of *Paradise War* and *Silver Hand* throughout *Song of Albion*, he will take his place as one of the greats of contemporary fantasy. If not, I hope he continues to improve, so his next series knicks our collective socks off.

Beyond Peretti, Elwood, and Lawhead, there are no SF/Fantasy writers working the Christian market and receiving attention from mainstream publishers. Yet there are a few up-and-comers in the children's market who may show up eventually. Sigmund Brouwer, who previously wrote Christian action-adventure and mystery books for children, wrote a six-book historical children's fantasy series set during the Crusades, *The Winds of Light* (1990-92). Bill Hand's first novel is *The One Prince: Book 1 of the Redaemian Chronicles*, a very Narnia-

influenced talking animal fantasy. Al Bohl, an artist and editor, wrote *Zaanan*, a four-book, comics-style illustrated SF adventure about a young member of a futuristic secret police elite who ends up joining the Christian part of the resistance. These books vary in quality from the excellently professional to material that I wouldn't show my friends, much less a publisher. But they are obviously trying very hard to do good work in their new genre, and I think we will be seeing more of them.

As a whole, the Christian publishing school of writers share many attitudes as well as religious tenets. They tend to have a fierce dedication to freedom of speech and religion coupled with fear of losing such freedom to authoritarian governments. Their books on these topics remind me a great deal of the 'free men hunted by a repressive society' stories common in the 1950's. The religious facets of their book are usually concerned with the Old Testament 'God Most High' than with the New Testament Jesus. This may be a plausibility issue when the setting is on another planet or in a polytheistic world. The Holy Spirit is usually mentioned only in connection with prophet or artist characters; this may be a reaction by writers against the fundamentalist over-emphasis on charismatic gifts during the 1980's. Despite the common incidence of angels and demons, resisting evil in everyday life and from everyday temptations is as common a theme as is resisting evil from demonic forces. But the most interesting thing is how often the protagonists are married persons or a family, in contrast to the isolated and orphaned heroes in most SF/Fantasy. All in all, the connection between the writers, the books, and their religious culture is never difficult to find.

The books and writers in this market are very different in viewpoint from those in the mainstream of SF and fantasy, but it must be emphasized that they are writing for readers who share their viewpoint and are more impressed by ideas and situations than by style. When good style is added, as it rapidly is being, this school will be able to stand with any other in the literature.

And it will. The sales figures on Christian SF/Fantasy are impressive even in the children's market. I suggest that young writers who seek a market might well look to the Christian publishers for a start in writing. It would seem rewarding. Also, a new generation of fans is forming over in the Christian market. I suggest that convention committees might wish to put flyers in Christian bookstores as well as in libraries, comic shops, conventions, and regular bookstores. The response may be better than we think. [✱]

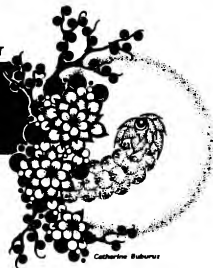


# Tana Leaves

Comments by Mark R. Leeper



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I was watching a mummy movie the other night. You know, one of those old Universal films where a mummy comes to life and kills people. These things were always a lot of fun in spite of some of the obvious absurdities. First of all, Egyptians were very short by today's standards. How scary is a monster about 55 inches high? If you have seen real mummies, that is about the average height. What is he going to do—grab you around your waist? Then there is the fact that ancient Egyptians almost never wrapped the legs separately. There is one mummy I have seen with the legs wrapped separately and some Hammer Films makeup artist really did model one of their mummies on the real thing, but the mummies in Universal's movies in the 1930s and 1940s were wrapped like no real mummies ever were. Uh, one exception there. Boris Karloff loses his bandages almost immediately in the original 1933 film *The Mummy*, but he was the mummy Im-ho-tep. All the other films were about a mummy named Kharis.

Incidentally, just for your edification, like Dracula there really was an Im-ho-tep. He has been nearly forgotten but he was one of history's geniuses. He was a great physician for the time. He also was a great architect who invented the idea of placing tapering mastaba (burial vaults) one on top of another. In doing so, he invented the pyramid; the step pyramid at Saqqara (the first of all pyramids) was built by him. He later became deified like the Pharaoh he built for and was worshipped far longer. I have heard there were still cults who worshipped him in the Middle Ages.

However, most of the old Universal mummy movies are about Kharis, who is a never-was character. Im-ho-tep was brought back to life with a magical scroll. Kharis never died due to the use of a sort of soup made from secret tana leaves. Tana is also a literary invention and, I can tell you, there were not a whole lot of leaves that were secret in Egypt. Everything green lives in a narrow strip on either side of the Nile.

The idea is that the mummy gets three of these

leaves during the cycle of the full moon to keep him alive. Nine leaves and he can actually walk. More than nine leaves and he will do the funky chicken all over the head and body of anybody who gets in his way. (Incidentally, while he walks at about one mile an hour and drags a foot, somehow he manages to catch the fleeing heroine.)

Anyway, it occurred to me to wonder how many of these leaves were needed. There are about 13 cycles of the full moon per year and they seem to give the leaves to the mummy about 4 nights each cycle. That is, each cycle of the moon is about 4 weeks, but each cycle of the *full moon*, whatever that is, seems to last about 4 nights. So the mummy will usually get 12 leaves per cycle of the moon. There are 13 cycles per year, so just maintenance to keep a mummy alive will cost you 156 leaves per annum per mummy. Now, say once a decade you have to raise Kharis to polish off the odd tomb desecrator or misguided Egyptologist. Maybe you have to raise your mummy 2 nights in that decade. That is 18 tana leaves per annum, if we spread the cost out. Just as a round figure, let's say you will disperse 160 tana leaves per year.

Egypt fell as a major power about 2,000 years ago after having been among the top three world powers for 3,500 years. It would be safe to estimate that Kharis was first placed in his case about 1,500 B.C., or 3,500 years ago. That would imply that he has consumed something like 550,000 tana leaves so far. Figuring 10 leaves to the ounce, 16 ounces to the pound, Kharis has already consumed 3,400 pounds of leaves (or 1,545 kilograms, if you prefer). They show these leaves being kept in a little box. It is possible that 1.75 tons of leaves are hidden in other boxes in the tomb, but it seems like a task that would be difficult to keep a secret. [x]

David Creek originally wrote this to be published in the letter column of *Publisher's Weekly*, but it was returned with the response that they had already printed sufficient responses to Barry Levin's article. Since it does contain material of interest to SF readers and writers, Dave sent it to me for consideration. We solicit your response.

## Collecting Manuscripts

Commentary by David Creek

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This is one writer who has no intention of complying with the suggestions Barry Levin made in the "My Say" column in the July 29, 1992 *Publisher's Weekly*. In that column, Levin lamented the passing of the typescript, in favor of the computer printout. As a collector of, and dealer in, original manuscripts, he was disappointed that collectors, archivists, and literary scholars would no longer have such scripts, with their various drafts and marginal notations, to study.

I currently have two science fiction novels under consideration at major publishers, and I am currently working on a third. While I respect Levin's feelings about seeing the evolution of the actual writing of a published work, I must assert that my writing is aimed at eventual publication, not in providing paper artifacts for scholars.

It takes my printer about twelve hours to print out a copy of a novel (yes, I know that's slow--a faster printer is the first thing I'm going to buy when I sell a book). I'm not inclined to print that book except for possible publication. Printing multiple drafts would be expensive and wasteful, and it negates one of the main advantages of using a computer--no paper to worry about storing in a cool, dry place or anywhere else.

Levin suggests that writers make printouts at all stages of a work-in-progress. This doesn't take into consideration how some of us laboring on computers work. As far as I'm concerned, until I've completed all revisions and satisfied myself that the work is ready for submission, it continues to evolve. This isn't a linear process. I don't do separate "drafts"--if I'm writing Chapter Five of a novel and realize I need to foreshadow events back in Chapter Two, I do so on the spot--adding instantly to the final copy, without making a separate draft. I revise and add to copy I've completed the day before, almost every time I sit down at the keyboard. Is that a separate draft every time I make minor changes, such as adding or deleting a word?

The point is that it's those minor changes as I



go along that would result in a new "draft" if I had to run the whole book through a typewriter again. Essentially, I have only one draft.

Recently I printed out a new copy of a novel I was about to submit to a publisher. I hadn't read any of it for a few months, and decided to scan through parts of it with "new eyes". I noticed a typo and a couple of phrases that I felt could be better. I corrected them. Should I have printed out a new copy of the work, without these minor changes, before I saved them? I don't think so.

A more ecologically-sound method of saving such drafts might be to save successive drafts (if that's how the writer works) on disk, keeping the disk available for any future scholars who might be interested in the book. Such a disk might also include any notes or outlines the writer has used to create the work--after all, many of us do that kind of preliminary work on disk, as well. I also liked the idea of an author writing a letter about the work, so that his or her intentions during the creation of the work could be plain.

There is also the matter of authorial humility to be considered; do I hope my novels will be published to universal acclaim, and that there will be an interest in them in decades to come? Yes, of course. Do I think this will happen? No. It takes a certain amount of ego to put your words out before editors and, eventually, the public. I wouldn't claim to have enough ego, though, to assume I'm necessarily creating anything lasting. I'm simply doing the best work I can and hoping it finds an audience.

As a dealer in science fiction and related works, Levin should realize that change is inevitable--and that any technology that makes things easier and more convenient is going to be used. The profession of manuscript collector and dealer may, unfortunately for Mr. Levin, be obsolete one day--but the process of archiving and studying literary works can continue, and that is, after all, the most important consideration. [\*]

# Travels with Dennis

by Dennis Caswell

I had arranged to travel with Bob Christmas (Yes, that is his real name!) to **MagiCon**, sharing the drive there. On the way I had arranged to spend the night at La Conte Lodge in the Smoky Mountains of Tennessee, near Gatlinburg. To get to the La Conte Lodge, one starts out at one of five drop-off points, then goes on a five to eight mile hike up Mount La Conte to the lodge. The usual route that people take is the Alum Lake Bluff trail, but we were adventuresome and decided to take the Boulevard trail. It may be called "The Boulevard Trail", but a boulevard it was not. The overall climb was the least of the five routes, but it made up for that by having several descents before culminating in a steep climb in the last mile or so. We were done in by the time we reached the lodge.

Once we had arrived, we checked with the staff to obtain our lodging for the evening. Much to our horror they could not find our names on the list. It turned out that our reservation was for the following evening, and that we had arrived a day early. It must be noted that La Conte Lodge is almost always sold out, especially during the summer and fall months. However, we were fortunate in that they had a vacant cabin and could accommodate us. We went to our cabin and collapsed for the next hour.

The main reason that people go to La Conte Lodge is to see the sunset and sunrise over the Smoky Mountains. Another reason that people go there is the sheer isolation of the place. There is no electricity, hence things are done in an old-fashioned manner. The meals are cooked on a wood stove, for example.

I had been to La Conte Lodge before, and found it very relaxing and peaceful. However, this time there was a group of people who were, as one would put it, rather strange. You may have heard about gay fandom. Well, these people would make gay fandom look as straight as an arrow. Even the staff at the lodge were astounded by the antics of these people. The balloons that they took with them to the overlook for viewing the sunset was bad enough, but I think the worst was the fashion show

they had the following morning. Remember, this place is a five mile hike from the nearest road!

In all, I think that was the most memorable part of the trip to **MagiCon**, the WorldCon notwithstanding. **MagiCon** was possibly the best WorldCon ever. The general consensus is that one's favourite WorldCon is the first one that they attend. For me, that was **Noreascon III**. However, **MagiCon** ranks high on my list of favourites. The con-course idea was taken from **Noreascon III**, and the idea of a Walt Willis enchanted golf course was great. Too bad that the convention was only five days long.

The next convention that comes to mind is the 1992 **World Fantasy Convention**. For this convention, I had arranged crash space with the "Star-rise Weyr" Pern fan group, and this made the convention quite affordable. In fact, this convention became very affordable when I arrived at Hamilton Airport, and found out they had overbooked the flight to Detroit. They were offering a free voucher to any volunteers that would stay behind, and go on the subsequent flight. Not having anybody waiting for me in Atlanta (my final destination), I volunteered, and after the flight departed, was given the voucher. (This paid for my trip to the **Confrancisco Worldcon**.)

The **World Fantasy Convention** is held over Halloween weekend each year, and this happened to be a week following the World Series. Living only 30 miles from Toronto, it is logical to assume that I would be a Blue Jays fan; they had just defeated Atlanta in the World Series. I was taking my life in my hands by wearing a Blue Jays baseball cap in the Atlanta Airport at that time. However, this is a small point.

The convention was held at Callaway Gardens, about 80 miles southwest of Atlanta. Having done my homework, I had arranged for a rental car for the weekend. Just as I was boarding the bus to go to the rental car lot, I overheard someone asking about the (non-existent) bus to Callaway Gardens. I jumped up, recognizing the reference, and

approached the person saying that I had a rental car and was going to Callaway Gardens. It was this way that I was introduced to writer Sean Russell.

At the convention I was on a panel with Jody Lynn Nye, Anne McCaffrey, and Esther Friesner, talking about dragons in fantasy literature. Jody posed the question to the panel to mention the most unusual dragons they had ever encountered in fantasy literature. After we all had given our answers, Esther mentioned the dragons in Terry Pratchett's *Guards, Guards*. I was at one end of the panel, and Esther was at the other end. As one, we all turned and looked at her, saying "She's right!"

The Starrise Weyr fan group had a lodge about a quarter mile from the main convention site, so having the rental car was a great idea. It serve to store items that one would normally keep in the hotel room. Southern Georgia had mild weather at that time of year, with the leaves just starting to turn colour. On the Saturday night, we had a room party at our lodge, and I think Anne McCaffrey made an appearance. I know that the chairman, Ed Kramer, showed up. Charles Shultz, of Pern fandom, was there, and he was joking that he states that he stands 5 foot 17 (or thereabouts).

The flight back was uneventful, except that I returned to Hamilton just after the ice storm. Fortunately, it was late on Sunday evening, and there were no traffic problems. The one nice thing about flying in/out of Hamilton airport is that the parking is free!

Playing tournament bridge, we won a trip to the Spring NAOP, to be held in Kansas City. This was enjoyable, and I managed to get a good look at the convention center that the KC in 2000 bid is planning to use for the Worldcon. The most unusual event that I played in was a team game on Sunday morning. I had a pick-up partner (one whom I had never played with before) for this game, and our teammates had never played team games before. Well, we won the first match; we won the second match; I lost the third match, and we tied the final match. This is more remarkable in that my partner was eleven years old. At the partnership desk, they were reluctant to mention this, but after being assigned Jason as my partner, I mentioned to them that I have played against the world's youngest life master. He lives in the Buffalo area, and is no older than Jason was. This game was one of the most memorable ones that I have experienced.

Next time I will mention **Confrancisco, WFC** 1993, and a rather unusual trip in Michigan. [!]

# Cold

Comments by Mark R. Leeper

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Well, we had another storm of the century this year. That phrase is something of a joke with Evelyn and me since last year we had three storms and each one was dubbed "the storm of the century" and not one dropped enough snow on our driveway to make it necessary to shovel. For five years, give or take a year, I have been writing on how some mysterious force watches over Evelyn. At the risk of boring long-time readers, I will just say that it is nominally Evelyn's responsibility to keep the driveway clear. That is a figurehead position like the fact that the Queen of England is the nominal head of the Anglican Church, but I kind of doubt that she goes around getting stuck up about it and telling people what to believe and exercising power. Evelyn is stuck up, tells me what to believe, and exercises power, but not really over the driveway. But somehow she became the driveway queen for one year and suddenly the driveway stopped needing to be done. It was something supernatural, I think. Since then we have had snow deep enough to shovel only once, though other areas relatively nearby seem to get more than we do. Oh, we might get an inch, but it goes away soon enough, but something seems to be watching over Evelyn and the driveway. I wonder if this is how new religions are born?

Anyway the Northeast has just been lambasted with a storm that left a little ice on our driveway and really bent over the tree in our front yard, but has done little otherwise. But in the papers I read that it was a devastating storm. There was a commentator on NPR who mentioned that perhaps ice storms and cold weather are good for you. He says that in warm climates people don't work as hard. They are laid back and go out picnicking. Cold, he thinks, is nature's way to tell us we should get to work. Well let me quote from Orson Welles from *The Third Man*. "In Italy, for thirty years under the Borgias, they had warfare, terror murder, and bloodshed, but they produced Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and the Renaissance. In Switzerland, they had brotherly love they had 500 years of democracy and peace--and what did they produce? The cuckoo clock." Well you know what else they had in Italy? A warm Mediterranean climate. What did Switzerland have? Snow. Lots of snow. [!]



by Cathy Reburns

Copyright March 1, 1994

## Quiglethorpe's Great Find

by H. E.  
Mercier Davis

*What a beautiful morning, what a beautiful day!* thought Emperor Jaconik, high ruler of all the galaxy, as he awoke in his royal bed, the one with the rich yellow sheets and comforter, and yellow curtains tumbling from a silver canopy. The bright summer sun poured through the wide French windows and lit up the yellow walls and ceiling in such a way that he seemed to be suspended in a pool of molten gold. In this room, Jaconik's most private chamber, he could indulge in the sweet color that delighted his eye and mind, even if he had to wear somber and dull colors for the rest of the world.

Even an emperor could not appear too gay.

He reached out and tugged the bell cord which dangled beside his bed, a strip of yellow whose red embroidery served to show the color more vibrantly. Immediately his manservant Geitza stepped through the doorway and bowed. "Your Highness?"

"I'm ready for my breakfast. Oh, and Geitza, what's the name of this color again? The decorator didn't say yellow, she said..."

"Maize, sir," replied the servant, without even an annoyed smile. He was asked that question nearly every morning.

"Ah, yes -- hurry up now, I'm hungry."

While Geitza was gone, Emperor Jaconik considered what he should wear that morning. The blue robe was too somber. The Green robe was too light, too springtime. The red, trimmed with gold--yes, that would do. Not that it mattered what he wore, because he would soon be dressing for The Cere-

mony.

The Ceremony. This Ceremony was to be the grandest, most glorious Ceremony and Celebration ever. Years had gone into its preparation; months would pass before all the grandeur would be shown, all the performances given, all the armies marched passed. Children might grow up thinking that gaiety was normal life, this most grand of Celebrations following this most glorious of Ceremonies. Emperor Jaconik himself would preside over the Feast of the Pilots and the Blessing of the Ships, before the silver-nosed spaceships were sent in a bath of thunder and fire to explore and conquer new corners of the galaxy for the glory of the Empire. For the glory of Emperor Jaconik. This Ceremony would be remembered forever.

Geitza entered the chamber, a silver breakfast tray in his hands. Nestled among the fine bone china was a folded piece of paper.

"What is this?" Emperor Jaconik asked as he unfolded the paper.

"A note, sir. I believe it is from Captain Quiglethorpe of the *Adventure*. He requests an audience."

"...and have completed my mission," Emperor Jaconik read aloud. "Geitza, what was his mission? All I remember is that I gave him something impossible so as to be rid of him."

"I believe that it was something to the effect that he should find the most remarkable item in the galaxy and bring it back."

"How could he have done that in only three years? I'll see him later -- I don't want to ruin my

day. This is the day of The Ceremony, Geitza! It will be glorious!"

"I know, sir," the manservant replied, almost mechanically.

After breakfast, Emperor Jaconik swept out of his chamber and went to The Ceremony Grounds, where The Feast of the Pilots would take place. Here he would shine in all of his Imperial Glory, a star before the people, and here he would be remembered for eons to come. And here...he gasped.

Something long, black, and incredibly monstrous was stretched across The Ceremony Grounds. Something with long tendrils coming off it that trailed -- no, spewed -- a sticky goo the same color as his beloved maize. Wooden tables and chairs were smashed into splinters, marble statues were toppled and topped by the goo. The food, imported from around the galaxy and prepared by an army of chefs, was gone, replaced by streamers of goo. The seven hundred banners, decorated with the Forbidden Stitch and made of material so fine that its like

could never be found again, were shredded and stained by the goo. Emperor Jaconik groaned and hid his face in his hands.

He would definitely be remembered for eons.

"I see you have found it, Your Highness!" squealed an over-energetic voice behind him. "I have brought it in time for The Ceremony!"

"You have," groaned Emperor Jaconik, as he turned to look at Captain Quiglethorpe. He was just five feet tall, and stood in such a way that the sunlight glimmered on his newly polished medals. The platinum lasergun at his waist was not even a millisecond out of phase; Emperor Jaconik wondered if he should allow the captain to carry it when he was thrown into a pit of slithering vipers. "But what is it?"

"Why, your Highness--it is the very thing you commanded me to bring--Something Overall Amazing."

END -- What else? [!]

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These are the third and fourth in a series of columns written for the late lamented fanzine *Pulsar*. Samantha offered them to me, and I am delighted to print them.

# Remembering Tomorrow

## #3 & #4

by Samanta b Jeudé

Science fiction is a strange genre, and SF Fandom an odder religion.

Yes, religion. Most fan will boldly tell you they are religious, and fearlessly list their Faith: Christians, Jews, Atheists, Agnostics, Pagans, Wiccans, flat-out Witches, Druids, what have you. They will be totally honest when they say this.

They will be totally wrong.

Fans -- people who read, love, enjoy, live for SF -- belong to a simple Faith, and that Faith is SF. Their rituals are Fannish Traditions ("All fans hug/kiss their friends the moment they see them, regardless of sex, age, or infirmity"), their pilgrimages are Cons, their Saints, Angels and Gods are the SF Pros: the men and women who create, with word or paint or blue-pencil, the worlds we've all been to,

loved, enjoyed, longed to touch.

Ask any person who loves SF who led them to SF, and I can practically guarantee they'll list Robert A. Heinlein, Isaac Asimov, or Andre Norton as The One Who Led Them to The Light. Norton's talents are rarely vocally acknowledged by adult SF fans; we put her aside, like all childish things. Asimov is, well, Asimov; it's hard to idolize a man who looks like a cross between your trying-to-be-20-when-he's-50 Uncle Bob and a teddy bear with delusions of humanity.

But Heinlein, well, Mr. Heinlein was... Godlike. Ask anyone lucky to have met RAH while he was living, and you'll get a narrative that sounds suspiciously like a tale from Lourdes. I speak from experience here, because I met the man, I got to talk to

him, had him shake my hand, had the Ultimate Compliment (see, I did this costume of That Red-headed Venusburg Gal, and he *liked* it!), and -- despite the chance discovery that we shared the same rare blood type (proof positive that he *had* a body!) -- I came away awed, aware of having Touched and Been Touched By The Presence.

It's hard to maintain a disinterested critique of a book when you're slap-dab against that sort of emotion. But, well, we're talking Classics, and if you're talking SF Classics, you can't go blithely on your way without paying respect to the one SF Classic that even the mundane world accepts as a ground-breaker: *Stranger in a Strange Land*.

It was, and is, the touchstone between the hard SF Fannish World and the rest of Reality. People read it, people admire it, a few nut cases have used it to chart their lives from it...no one criticizes it. For the simple reason that *Stranger* -- is a story that shouldn't be criticized by mere mortals; it's the tale of a man, genetically Human-normal, who becomes a SuperMan. The story of how this Man reacts with Humanity, grapples with it, embraces it, and --in the end-- raises Humanity to a pinnacle from which the race can see its emergence into the next evolutionary step, not so much Super-Humanity as Beyond-Humanity.

The original idea was submitted to Heinlein by John Campbell, the Editor Who Made SF. Heinlein grappled with the idea briefly in the short story "Gulf", was dissatisfied with the end product, and (according to his posthumous memoirs, *Grumbles from the Grave*) kept trying to tackle the idea again and again, slamming his head against the wall of his own (whisper the heresy softly) normality. The story, when it was finally (by Heinlein's standards) finished, was judged (by the publisher) to be too long, and was accordingly "hacked" into a more manageable size.

In 1990, with considerable hoopla, the original manuscript was published. For the first time in a quarter of a century, the complete and ungilded *Stranger in a Strange Land* was published.

Two weeks later, for reasons too convoluted to recount, I found myself in Minneapolis for 10 days with only both versions of *Stranger* to read. So, alternating by chapters, I read and contrasted both versions.

Talk about Heinlein overload!

And...regrettably...talk about disappointment.

The first time I read *Stranger in a Strange Land* was in high school, where I was (or so it seemed) the only person with an IQ in triple digits, and I found it both moving and real. The last time

(until Minneapolis) that I read the novel was in Grad School, and I found it...disturbing...in places.

Reading it now, in the 90s, I can only echo Heinlein's best hero:

"Oh, my people!"

Okay. Forgive me, but...here goes.

*Stranger in a Strange Land* is a 50s' fantasy, where the men (the Good Guy men, that is) are eternally right, realistically cynical, clear-thinking adults who realize that (1) women are for screwing; (2) women are happiest when they are naked, barefoot, and pregnant; and (3) that religion, Society, and Western philosophy have Mucked Up All These Truths.

You don't want to know what the women (the Good Guy women, that is) realize.

Heinlein starts with a hoary -- but clever -- way of creating his SuperMan, by having him raised by a different race as one of them. Kipling and Edgar Rice Burroughs created their Noble Savages, the ever-moral and properly honorable Mowgli and Tarzan, in such a tradition. Heinlein was smart enough to use Howard Fast's reasoning that if a child raised by animals became a Noble Animal, a child raised by Super Beings would be a Super Being.

Valentine Michael Smith, the boy raised by Martians, is brought to a world he finds terrifyingly heavy and wet, confusingly complex, and bewilderingly mucked up. He is confined, plotted over, and threatened, then rescued by plucky Nurse Gillian, who takes him to Wise Jubal Harshaw, who wants to help Mike mature without losing his precious freedom or precocious wisdom.

Mike sort-of leans on and grows from Jubal; he reads, he absorbs, he digests book-learning. But it's a woman who's needed for his Initiation to Adulthood; not until Mike loses his virginity does he become "mature". Then it's only a few steps to Mike's realization that (1) he's a Messiah, and (2) it's time to figure out how to do the Messiah-thing.

It gets worse from there.

I'm not trying to sound Politically Correct, but Gillian, who is presented as a competent, capable Nurse with loads of practical knowledge, turns into a weepy mess once she realizes she has no male back-up, the reporter who got her involved with Mike having suspiciously disappeared into the clutches of a Government Agency. He only plan is to find a man to whom she can turn over this mess.

Right. And if you believe that, I suggest you talk to author Sharon Webb (a Real Nurse), or Marcia McCoy (Fan and Paramedic, known to invade bathrooms marked **MIEN** when no male pre-



sent knew how to handle a poisoned kid), or any other competent nurse. Then stand back.

Gillian starts out believable, and somehow dissipates into another of Jubal's girl-toys; by the time she's doing a strip show, I lost interest/belief in what she had become. Talk to a woman who does a strip or nude dance for a living about her feelings towards Jill, and you'll get the same sort of reaction as you would from the above-mentioned female med techs.

The way the other women in *Stranger* are described makes one want to go out and blow up some good ol' boys. Unfortunately, Heinlein's good ol' boys are just as moronic as Heinlein's women. They all act as though they were the double-digit delights with whom I suffered through high school -- no, I take that back, not even those guys were that dumb, that convinced that A Gun Makes Me Invincible.

The expanded version, I hasten to add, only intensifies the imbecility of everyone who isn't a Heinlein Male, and intensifies the Sex Drive of the Heinlein Females.

I've known cats in heat that were less sex-driven.

Why does this story keep drawing people in, keep fascinating most readers, keep the title (proud AND deserved) of Classic?

Two reasons, one of which I obliquely touched on earlier:

(1) You, the reader, are assumed to be Part of the Gang; and

(2) Heinlein discovered Sex, and managed to make it fun.

In regard to this first reason: the Reader spends enough time in their minds of Jubal and Mike that s/he is guaranteed to feel that, "Yes, that's me, that's how I would handle Ultimate Power!" The feeling is so intense that most of the readers, regardless of their sex, identify with the Good Guys, who are Jubal Harshaw and Valentine Michael Smith. I *HATED* the girls (and I do mean girls; Heinlein's "women" are about as mature as my ten year old niece, except Jennifer had more sense and less sex obsession than the lot of them rolled together); it wasn't until much later that I realized that I, a woman, was supposed to identify with the nymphs who are Heinlein's heroines.

The incidental characters are cardboard and that's acceptable because, in our own minds, we don't know spear-carriers -- characters whose lives don't impact heavily on ours, like the kid who bags your groceries -- as individuals. Since so many of Heinlein's spear-carriers end up dead, it's just as

well; Heinlein doesn't kill a major character unless he wants to emphasize a major point, whereas a multitude of minor deaths are tossed in to show just how powerful Mike is. The Reader is shown the Way to Superhumanity, and the message it simple: be yourself and Love others.

The second reason, though, is probably the reason that *Stranger* became so powerfully popular with my generation, and that requires a minor digression.

Most of us who grew up in the 50s knew that the Atom Bomb was going to drop on our cities, World War III was just around the corner, and the whole world was going to Go Up in Flames. We knew this because it was thrown at us constantly: at school ("Atom Bomb drill time! Hide under your desk!"), at the movies (lots of newsreels showing Evil Russians, Wily Chinese, and loads of shots of Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Bikini detonations), even on TV (would you believe a cheery set of ads encouraging you to "Duck and cover!?" Believe it). Our parents, our teachers, our churches, Society at large kept telling us that our future would be so much nuclear ash.

This led a lot of us to read and enjoy SF that said we *wouldn't* die (probably why *Star Trek* was so popular with Baby Boomers but not their parents). We all started believing what we read in these hopeful science fiction stories. So we followed our favorite authors -- Heinlein, Asimov and Norton -- from the safety of the Children's Library to the Adult Stacks. Heinlein and Asimov and Norton were judged by the librarians to be "safe" (not sexual), and therefore were made available to any bright 14 year old who'd read the entire Children's Selections twice and wanted something challenging. Heinlein and Asimov and Norton were judged chaste and non-controversial, and therefore acceptable.

Then came *Stranger in a Strange Land*, which was probably the first thing we read about sex other than hygiene novels or "stiffeners". And, surprise! it said that not only would we hit the 21st century alive and well, but we'd discover all these new, fun ways to use our bodies. Things that we'd been told (by the Doom-sayers) were bad were being described in all sorts of delightful ways. Fun ways. All described in a manner that said -- not quietly or meekly, but boldly and bravely -- "Sex is Fun! Sex is Good! Having Sex is a way to become Superhuman!"

They say SF isn't inspirational.

So throw aside the painful girl-toys and stupid cops and venal politicians of *Stranger in a Strange*

Land, and come share water with me. Come hug me, hold me, kiss, me.

Who knows? Tomorrow, we *may* be gods.

## Remembering Tomorrow #4

In my last essay, I asserted that SF Fandom is a religion, and listed The Three Most Likely To Have Led You To SF: Robert A. Heinlein, Isaac Asimov, and Andre Norton.

Incongruously enough, I wasn't inculcated into science fiction by any of the Big Three: my introduction was a series of delightful books, which I vainly lusted to own, whose author has long since vanished into the mists of memory, but whose title I remember as *Mr. Bass and the Wonderful Mushroom Planet* [by Eleanor Cameron, --Lan]--it had nothing to do with the 60s' drug scene; being deliberately medically addicted to morphine, with all its wondrous visions, followed by the terrific "fun" of going cold-turkey, all at the age of 2, rather stifled my interest in magic mushrooms if not mushroom planets.

I examined Heinlein's most famed work, *Stranger in a Strange Land* (not his best; that one is, beyond a shadow of a doubt, *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*) in the last column. I'll pass for now on Andre Norton -- so far as I can tell, the woman has no single signature Classic, and I'm in the process of plowing through enough of her stand-alones to do a general comment -- until unless someone can suggest a single Classic That Is Norton (not the Witch World series! They're fantasy, not SF, and I'm not ready to open that can of worms...yet).

Which leaves me with Isaac Asimov, a man I've described as a cross between an aging teen and a teddy bear. He has two bona fide classics to his name, and both have stood the test of time:

"Nightfall" (no, I'm not going to critique a short story), and

*The Foundation Trilogy*.

Yes, technically, *Foundation* is actually three books: *Foundation*, *Foundation and Empire*, and *Second Foundation*. For that fact, they weren't even books originally, but a series of Classic Novellas (or Novelettes; I can never tell the two apart). But the scope, the sweep, the grandeur that is *The Foundation Trilogy* is not three single books, or x-number novelettes/novellas (or n-number of sequels and tie-togethers; more on that later), it is, simply, *Foundation*.

Besides, as said above, I'm not going to judge a single short story (or novelette or novella).

What we have, in *Foundation*, is not a simple story, like the standard Boy Meets Girl, Boy Loses Girl, Boy Marries Alien. Technically speaking we don't even get to a girl until the second part of *Foundation and Empire*, and the Girl has no intention of marrying the Alien. But in Pulp Era fiction when John Campbell was busy creating the Pantheon of SF Gods, when Asimov was a skinny kid and Heinlein an ex-naval officer discovering he could actually make money in this fledgling genre, there were mainly two themes: the Boy Meets Girl one, or the Great but Misunderstood Scientist Makes Great Discovery, GbMS Describes in Exacting Detail His New Discovery, or GbMS' Discovery Is Stolen By Evil Aliens/Crooks/Government Agents, GbMS' Son/Nephew/Protégé Gets the Discovery Back, Improves the Discovery, & Conquers the Universe.

We are not talking edge-of-the-seat stuff, here. You knew who the good guys were; they talked like rocket scientists, or they were "frank and forthright." You knew who the Bad Guys were: dey talked wit' tik accents an' dey wuz scummy, messy an' dumb! You knew who the Girls were: they were the reason the Discovery got Lost in the first place, they were gorgeously beautiful, and they had IQs of -2. You knew what would happen, eventually, and for the most part you leaned back and let the story wander where it would.

So I suspect the first part of *Foundation*, "Bridle", came as a shock. We have a Boy all right, and a Rocket Scientist, and a Great Discovery. No Girl (big deal), no Evil Aliens, no Crooks, but, hey, we do have Government Agents, Agents who promptly fub their roles by ignoring the Great Discovery, being simply satisfied to harass the poor Rocket Scientist, an aged gentleman named Hari Seldon, while driving his would-be protégé halfway across the Galaxy to the very edge of the action....

There it ends.

Huh? Waitaminnit, waitminnit, the Good Guys LOSE?!

A-ha! No, they don't; they want to be exiled far, far away from the center of things. Because, you see, the Great Discovery is that the Galactic Empire (unlike all other Galactic Empires before it) is falling!

That was just the start! We have scientists who are sneaky and actually use politics to get what is needed! We have scientists creating a religion backed by science! We have (honest!) characters who have character, plot-lines with plots, a true hero who

is elderly, weak -- and stays behind to hold back the Bad Guys, knowing his death will buy precious time for his dreams.

We have a book that is nothing like anything seen before.

That's *Foundation*.

In *Foundation and Empire*, we follow these people -- not the Big Figures of History, but the tiny real individuals who make history happen. We see scientists fall into their own religion -- a belief in "The Seldon Plan", the great Plan to cut from tens of millennia to a single millennium the years of barbarism that will follow Galactic collapse. We watch them come up against the fading power of the Galactic Empire...and survive. We witness the panic that erupts when the "Perfect Plan" that is Hari Seldon's Psycho-history crumbles in the face of the one facet of History that cannot be mathematically predicted: the rise of a charismatic leader whose very existence threatens the Foundation's counter-barbaric stance.

We even have \*gasp\* a Woman (no girl, this Bayta) who foils that charismatic leader in a way that is totally out of left field yet perfectly believable.

And we're only two-thirds of the way through!

*Foundation* is, bluntly, the perfect example of a Classic that stands long after its inception. A fresh story-line that undid all the rules of its time, *Foundation* argued that "the little people" are infinitely more interesting than broadly-drawn caricatures, even heroic cartoons. By following the broad scope of history, then peopling it with people, Asimov created a tale that cannot age. His men are not unmanned by Women's Lib, his women do not dwindle under the expectation that a woman carry her own weight. His children are kids, not mini-adults, with all the agonizing tender emotions and cold manipulation that teens suffer through the course of adolescence. His adults have the courage to let their dreams - and their children -- into the wider world with all the fears and hopes suffered by all parents.

So why is such a brilliant work -- then and now -- so often ignored in the face of Asimov's more revered peer Robert Heinlein?

Beats me. Gods know, I was just going to browse through the *Foundation* books for this review -- and ended up reading the trilogy until the wee hours despite the fact that I knew, have known for a quarter of a century, how it will end up. No passive leaning back on this one!

But there are a few clues.

Asimov has often been faulted for his "transparent" prose; i.e., what he writes is so simply pre-

sented that it doesn't seem to have taken any talent in the process. His characters are recognizably themselves -- Pream Palver is no Mule, although they have similar roots -- but they have no passion other than their dedication to their goals. There are only two female characters in the book, one happily married and the other an adolescent reaching for the maturity she will discover too soon. Both are loved deeply, whole-heartedly...and in predictable familial ways.

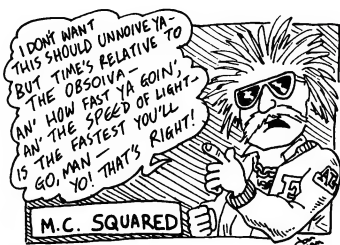
Asimov's women are never cited for their verisimilitude...and yet I feel as though I have met, known, and respected both Bayta and Arkadia (a too-bright girl-child who matures believably into a woman I'm certain I met/knew/will see again), whereas I find Heinlein's women, often extolled as "believable", to be irritatingly stupid, infuriatingly cute, repellantly lusty mommie-wannabes.

Perhaps it is the very transparency of Asimovian prose that makes it so dismissable; there are no "signature" lines by him, no line that you could read out of context and say, "Yes, that's Asimov." Perhaps it is that we long for broad heroics in our SF rather than the quiet dedication to duty. Perhaps it is that we have come to expect Asimov to expand on Science (as he did so well) rather than expand SF.

Perhaps it is that Asimov's more recent *Foundation* books read like simple-minded formula-following rather than eschewing the expected as the originals did so gracefully.

One thing is certain: there is only one *Foundation*, only one work of its stature. Nothing since has had its clarity of purpose or its clear vision of the future. Maybe that's a good thing.

Sometimes, one good example is enough of a goal to aim for. [1]



# My First Worldcon

## or

# The Birth of a Hoax Bid

by Laurel Winter

My first Worldcon was incredibly memorable. It could have been memorable in a bad way, because my credit card holder fell out of my purse in the parking lot of the Happy Chef in Owatonna as I was transferring my stuff to John Rezmerski's pickup. Several hundred miles later, I discovered that I had no credit cards, no instant cash card, and no driver's license -- hence, no picture ID.

This was not a great discovery. I called Happy Chef. They knew nothing. I called the Holiday gas station in Albany, Minnesota. They knew nothing. I called Calhoun Square, where we had picked up Eric Heideman and Phil Jennings and Hilary Posner. Nada. I tried to call home, hoping I'd left the card holder on the counter, but Bruce had taken the kids to Barnes & Noble, where Nick was participating in a Brain Quest contest. (He aced it and won a \$10 gift certificate which he then spent on "Jicky Poo," this disgusting semi-slimy stuff that he and Zack then demolished the house with. I think I'm glad I was in Canada....) I called my hotel and explained my cardless state, and the fact that my roommate only had the Discover card which they didn't take. They assured me that we could work something out, which reassured me slightly. (That is, when I wasn't thinking about someone using my cards on a mad spending spree at the Mall of America, or the fact that I had about \$30 with me and I needed a picture ID to pick up my con badge.) The rest of the trip to Winnipeg was not the carefree spree I had envisioned.

Before we crossed the border, I found out from Bruce that my cards had been found by an honest, kindly, Marigold truck driver, who just happened to be on his way to my home town of Rochester. Bruce had already picked them up from the Marigold plant. Happy Days! At least I knew where they were, even if I was not in actual, physical possession of them.

The woman at the hotel desk was extraordinari-

ly nice and cooperative. I had my con receipt with a card number on it, and we came up with a plan wherein Bruce would photocopy my card, front and back, and fax it to the hotel. They would use that as confirmation. He couldn't do it until the next day since the nearest fax place had closed down already. (We had a fax modem on our computer, but no scanner, so at present we are limited to faxing computer generated documents.) One problem down, two to go.

The stars were clearly favoring me (or was it the planets?). The first person I ran into upon entering the convention center was Polly Peterson, who not only knows that I am who I say I am, but is heavily involved in working on and running conventions. I enlisted her as a character reference, and it turned out that she was working for the exact person who needed to approve my picture-less state. After waiting for a while in a queue of other people who also needed to talk to this busy fellow, I was finally able to be registered. Two down.

Hilary and I got some food at a nearby deli and then she confirmed that her cash card would actually cause ATMs to spit out Canadian currency. She paid me her share of the hotel bill in cash, and *voila*, all the problems were solved. I was ready to have fun!

One of the reasons I haven't gone to worldcons before--aside from the fact that they're expensive and seemed intimidatingly large--was that they occur just as my kids start school. I couldn't really see myself missing the first day of school. But Winnipeg was so close, I couldn't see missing that either.

I told myself that I'd just go this once. Hah! Worldcons are way too much fun. I will definitely have to do it again. (Not next year, since we're going to Australia in April, and two overseas trips would be way too expensive, but soon.)

One of the fun things was being able to hang

out in the SFWA suite and turn into a burbling fool in the company of extremely famous people. (You should have seen me lose all semblance of coherence while meeting Harry Turtledove.)

Of course, that was not the only place to meet great people. I found that elevators, sidewalks, programming rooms, parties, *et cetera*, were filled with interesting and friendly people. I just kept introducing myself and striking up conversations--and then having my sieve-like memory kick in. I'm sure I introduced myself to some of the same people several times, having no memory of the previous conversation. (I just hope people didn't think I was rude, as it was certainly never my intention.)

Friday night, Eric Heideman and I went out to supper with Robert and Sylvia Li, Craig Nelson, Doug Shufelt and Clay Harris, at Alycia's a Ukrainian restaurant. I was introduced to the joys of perogies. Eric suggested we come up with a good hoax site, and I said, "How about Antarctica?" And the Antarctica in '99 bid party was born. We came up with eight pages of ideas in my little notebook. Later that night, Hilary connected with P.J. Singh, a young man from Winnipeg who was at his first convention. (Even though I've decided that **Minicon**, at 3000+ fans is plenty of practice--a few extra thousand people don't make that much of a difference--I would not recommend a worldcon as a first-ever conventions.) He was wandering around the parties looking lost, wondering why no one was talking about science fiction. Hilary (who was also at her first worldcon) rescued him and we got him involved in planning the hoax bid party. He caught on immediately and volunteered to type up our flyer and top ten list at work, as well as giving us a whole new crop of ideas. (He left our hotel to discover that his car had been towed -- some introduction to conventions....)

Everyone we talked to about the party had ideas. Neil Rest told us we had to have the Holy Floor Plans and suggested we build a cardboard Quonset hut. Phil Foglio did some original artwork for our flyer. It was so much fun to be a part of something that so many people got involved in.

The next afternoon, Eric and Hilary and I bought party supplies appropriate to the theme: ice beer, iced tea, iceberg lettuce--you get the idea. Then we split up to attend/participate in a little programming, and met in our room again to do the final set-up.

We expected maybe 50 or 100 people. By counting the badge stickers we had left over (plain white ovals from an office supply store) we estima-

ted around 500 people attended between 9 PM and 2AM (including the famous Lan and Maia), when we started trying to close down. Not bad on one case of beer, a bottle of vermouth (mixed with ginger ale and lemon for the Italian iced tea), and assorted clear pops and glacier water. The marshmallow and toothpick sculptures inspired tremendous creativity. (Hilary made me throw all away but one, which I probably ought to be grateful for....) The "live satellite feed showing current weather conditions at our site" (snow) cracked people up. We even had to break into the second head of iceberg lettuce. It was way cool.

By 2 AM we had a donation cup that more than broke even. (We're planning on doing some mailings to our 100+ mailing list and putting on a party at **Minicon**. Anyone want to be a missionary to take our "bid" to other conventions that we won't be attending? We already have a volunteer for Glasgow, but I'm sure he would appreciate other people bringing a bag or two of marshmallows in case they are not available in Scotland....)

By the time 2AM rolled around, Hilary and I were exhausted and ready to call it a night. Then it was just a matter of getting rid of the stragglers. Hints like, "Time to go now, guys," did nothing. It didn't help that more people kept coming in. Finally, we shut the door. Hilary looked at me and collapsed on the bed. I looked at her and collapsed on the floor. One of the hangers-on said, "Gee, women are so subtle" -- and kept on talking.

About 2:30 we finally got the last person out and collapsed for real. The next day we found that we'd been mentioned three times in the con newsletter (including tying for a Hogu for best hoax convention), and people were really talking about the Antarctica party. It was such a blast. Thanks to everyone who contributed.

The rest of the convention was great too. It was hard to leave Monday morning -- especially at 8:30 AM. The drive back was fine too, although long. When it was my turn to drive, I stuck to the speed limit -- in my license-less state, I had no desire to be stopped by the cops.

I got home around midnight on Monday, and zombied around sleeping for two days after that. My kids and husband did the first days of school thing just fine without me. I found out about a new magazine and an anthology possibility, as well as meeting several editors. Professionally and personally, I think worldcons are tremendous.

Look up an Antarctica in '99 bid party at a convention near you -- but vote for Australia! [X]

# Fanzines

It has been approximately a year and a half since I last did this column. As before, I tried to keep the fanzines that arrived in one place, and I managed pretty well until we moved a year ago and in the process I am sure that I lost some. I am going to list those I have and make some comments. Don't expect much, but I'll do what I can, and I may merely give basic information. All are available for the usual unless otherwise noted. Please make checks out to the editor, not the name of the zine. (Finished 28 December 94)

Alamo Chronicles, The. PO Box 291015, San Antonio, TX 78229-1015 USA. The b'dding z'ne of LONESTAR-CON 2, wh'ch won the b'rd for the Worldcon 'in 1997.

American Journal of Psychoscamology, vol 5, #5. Ell'ot "Elst" We'nsste'n, 11850 Mt. Harvard Ct., Alta Loma, CA 91737 USA. The usual or even \$2. A h'lar'ous look at Devon'an Regency Danc'ng. As Elst has written, "If you are eas'ly offended, then something 'n here should be 't to you."

Astromancer Quarterly, Feb, May/August, 1993. Joe Maragl'no, editor, PO Box 500, Br'idge Stat'ion, N'agra Falls, NY 14305 USA. \$2/'ssue. A very slick z'ne with color artwork, a fanz'ne and art'n-fanz'nes review columns, humorous poetry and/or asparagus poetry, con reports, mov'e and books rev'ews, and lots more. Very 'interest'ng.

Bardic Runes, VI-IX. Michael McKenny, Editor, 424 Cambr'dge St S, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 4H5 CANADA. (\$4/'ssue, \$10/3 'ssues; Canadian Cheques to Michael, American cheques to Cathy Woodgold.) A very nicely produced fanzine of traditional fantasies fiction and poetry. I've read some very 'interesting stuff in here.

Ben's Beat. Ben Ind'ck, 428 Sagamore Avenue, Teaneck, NY 07666 USA. This 's Ben's FAPaz'ne wh'ch 'ncludes his Theatre Beat and book rev'ews. Good, 'interesting stuff.

Ben'Z'ne 4. Ben Zuhl, 2239 Highland Avenue, Falls Church, VA 22046. Ben publ'sh a fanz'ne back 'n the late 70s, early 80s. He's back and this 's a catch-up 'ssue for his friends with whom he had lost touch.

The Black Hole #33. c/o Leeds University U'n'ion, PO Box 157, Leeds, LS1 1UH, UNITED KINGDOM. The clubz'ne of the Leeds University SF group. High production values, lovely covers and artwork, and decent contents.

Busswarble #9. Michael Ha'lstone, 14 Bolden Street, He'delberg, Vic. 3084, AUSTRALIA. A mostly letterz'ne with commentary from Michael.

California Crap #13. A personal and op'n'ion-z'ne from Arthur Hlavaty, 206 Valentine St., Yonkers, NY 10704-1814 USA.

Canadian Journal of Detournement #1-3. No address 's g'vern, but these short cartoon spoofs of political statements came with Opuntia, so somehow Dale Speirs 's respons'ble.

Channel Z #1. Joel Zakem returns to the apazine ALPS with this z'ne. Joel D. Zakem, 2127 Eastern Parkway, Apt 2, Louisville KY 40204 USA.

Chris's Drumm Books, Book catalogues #66-85 PO Box 445, Polk City, IA 50226, USA. Catalogues, obviously; Chr's also puts out h's own line of little books wh'ch are well worth looking at. If you are 'nterested, or a collector, contact h'm.

Comic Art Studies #51. Randell W. Scott & Peter M. Coogan, editors. MSU Libraries, East Lansing, MI 48824-1048 USA. A newsz'ne about com'cs.

Cube #53-55. Produced by Hope K'ifer, Box 1624, Madison, WI 53701-1624 USA. Available for the price of an SF3 membership. The editor wants feedback, art'cles, the usual.

Cyberbunny #2. Tara & Robert Glover, 16 Av'ary Place, Leeds LS12 2NP, UNITED KINGDOM. Stories about pets--some spoofs, some serious. Rather amusing and 'nterest'ng.

DASFAX vol 26, #2, 3, 5, 6. Editor: Rose Beetem, 3225 W. 29th Ave., Denver, CO 80211-3705 USA. Monthly newsletter of the Denver Area Science Fiction Association (DASFA). \$10/year. Included club news, book, movie and fanzine reviews, 'nformation about the club-sponsored convention, MILE-HI-CON.

De Profundis #253-272. Los Angeles Science Fiction Society, 11513 Burbank Blvd., North Hollywood, CA 91601. The official newsletter of LASFS, filled with con and fan information, reviews, minutes, etc.

Derogatory Reference #75, 76. Arthur Hlavaty, 206 Valentine St., Yonkers, NY 10704-1814 USA. Another personalzine of Arthur Hlavaty. This is more extensive in that he includes reviews, artwork, and his diary.

Discordia Revisited #1. Arthur Hlavaty, 206 Valentine St., Yonkers, NY 10704-1814 USA. Once Arthur realized that he had been doing his fanzine for almost a third of his life, and that many of the newer readers never read his earlier work, he collected some of his better essays for this particular issue. And it looks as though more will come.

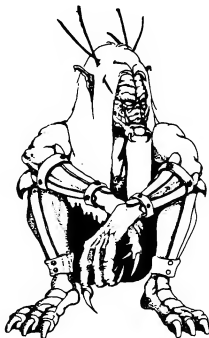
Doodlebug #2 & 3. Laurie Yates, 805 Spyglass Lane, Las Vegas, NV 89107 USA. Done for fun and diversion. Fun reading.

Dreamhaven Books & Comics, #52-55. 1309 4th Street SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414 USA. Published bi-monthly, and gives a listing of current and upcoming stock. Good sales.

DUFFacto Sept. 93 & Spring 94. Dick & Leah Smith, 410 W. Willow Road, Prospect Heights, IL 60070-1250 USA. Newsletter of the Down Under Fan Fund. The Spring issue has an interesting list of previous Delegates, and whether or not they produced a trip report of some sort. TAFF should do so too.

Empties #11, 12, 13. Martin Tudor, 845 Alum Rock Road, Ward End, Birmingham, B8 2AG. UNITED KINGDOM. A combined personalzine and genzine with interesting stuff. I really should get in touch with Martin, since I have fond memories of meeting him at the Brighton Worldcon back in 1987.

Erg, #121-128. Terry Jeeves, 56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough YO12 5RQ, E. Yorkshire UNITED KINGDOM. LOC, \$2/issue in US bills (not cheque, they cost too much to process). Erg is in its 35th year of publication. Terry continues to produce these zines (which are very interesting) with extreme regularity. They are filled with his personal life and thoughts, evocative essays, short book reviews, and his wonderful art. His trip reports to the US are very interesting. He is going to fold it, as the response has been much too sparse. I need to write him a loc.



Ethel the Aardvark #47. Melbourne SF Club, PO Box 212, World Trade Center, Melbourne, 3005, Victoria AUSTRALIA. Nice clubzine with news, reviews, and the usual stuff. This has a tribute to Roger Weddall, the DUFF delegate who died of cancer before he could put out his DUFF trip report. There is also an interesting interview with George Turner. Lots more.

European Trash Cinema, Vol 2: #8-9. Craig Ledbetter, Box 5367, Kingwood, TX 77325 USA. Quarterly, \$15/year. Craig continues his excellent coverage of Grade-B foreign horror films and videos, and asking for such material. There is no dearth of people interested in this subgenre of the horror film.

Eyeballs in the Sky #8. Tony Berry, 55 Seymour Road, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 4EP, UNITED KINGDOM.

Fanalysis #13-15. Ray Schaffer, PO Box 1014, Kapauu, HI 96755-1014. In trade for LL Ray sends his FAPA zine. Interesting collection of musings and things of interest to him--also to me. I should write to tell him so.

Fantastic Collectibles Magazine, #116-120. Ray F. Bowman, PO Box 167, Carmel, IN 46032. \$10/year, \$17.50/2 years. Ray lists the books and magazines he has for sale, and continues to include advertizing from other dealers/collectors, as well as publishing some fiction. #120 includes some background material for the film Heinlein's The Puppet Masters.



Fantasy Collector, The, #248. Camille "Caz" Cazedessus, Jr., 7080 Highland Road/ Bayou Fountaine, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70808 USA. \$18/year (12 issues). If you are interested in pulps, get this fanzine. It has articles and ads, and nicely reproduced pulp covers and stories.

Fantasy-Scope, vol. 3. Roger Sims, 34 Creekwood Square, Cincinnati, OH 45246 USA. This issue comes much sooner than #2 did after #1-- just a matter of a year or so. It has lots of interesting information about the Sims, and articles by several other fans. For travel fans, Pat Sims recounts their journey through Africa with her husband, Mike and Carol Resnick. Very interesting, and highly recommended.

Fanzine Fanatique #21. Keith A. Walker, 6 Vine Street, Lancaster, LA1 4UF, ENGLAND. For trade only, for your fanzine. A short version of the large fanzine reviewzine that Keith normally puts out. This is the 21st anniversary issue.

FILE:770, #98-105. Mike Glycer, 5828 Woodman Ave., #2, Van Nuys, CA 91401, USA. 5/\$8 The premiere fannish newsletter. Lots of interesting writing and lots of events slanted from Mike's very unique point of view.

Filking Times, The #36. Rick & Deborah Weiss, editors, 13261 Donegal Drive, Garden Grove, CA 92644-2304. A very chatty newszine about filking; has interviews, news, reviews. Rick and Deborah keep looking for material, so, filkers, send news and information to them. \$7.50/12 issues.

Focus #25. Edited by Carol Ann Green (5 Raglan Avenue, Raglan Street, Hull, HU5 2JB ENGLAND) and Julie Venner (42 Walgrave Street, Newland Avenue, Hull HU5 2LT ENGLAND). Fanzine of the British Science Fiction Association. Interesting articles and comments by British fans and authors.

Fosfax #165-172. Timothy Lane & Janice Moore, editors; Fosfa, PO Box 37281, Louisville, KY 40233-7281, USA. \$12/6 issues. A fairly large, consistently produced bimonthly clubzine filled with reviews, commentary and locs. The lettercolumn is lively with many authors participating.

From Sunday to Saturday, Jan/Feb 1994. Don Fitch, 3908 Frigo, Covina, CA 91722 USA. A general-circulation infozine which winds up in various apas as well.

Frozen Frog, The, #7-8. Benoit Girard, 1016 Guillaume-Boisvert, Cap-Rouge, Quebec G1Y 1Y9 CANADA. A semi-personal fanzine with reviews, articles, and a strong lettercolumn.

Frozen Frontier, The. S.M. Campbell, 1447 Lincoln Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3E 0Y6 CANADA. A very personal zine with her likes, dislikes and opinions. An interesting list of 12 books SM would take to a "Backwoods Planet Colony" and her reasons for doing so.

Galactic-Celtic Newsflash #6-8, #6-10, and a Special Report on Finstergrun. Franz H. Miklos, A-5151 Nussdorf 64, AUSTRIA. A fanzine with an international flavor, written in English so to promote fandom worldwide. You learn a lot from reading this.

Gasbag #188-193. The Gilbert and Sullivan Boys and Girls newsletter, funded and published by FUM-GASS (Friends of the University of Michigan Gilbert and Sullivan Society). Jean Lynn Barnard, 1810 Charlton Ave., Ann Arbor, MI 48103. Membership in FUMGASS range from \$10-\$50 per year, and Gasbag comes with membership. Lots of interesting tidbits about G&S.

Gegenschein #67-70. Eric Lindsey, 7 Nicoll Avenue, Ryde, NSW 2112, AUSTRALIA. Irregular, but interesting commentary about life, books, and fandom by Eric.

Gradient #8-10. Robert Sabella, 24 Cedar Manor Court, Budd Lake, NJ 07828. This little fanzine is a collection of essays and commentary that Bob has written about SF literature. He has a good grasp on what he likes and the ability to write clearly about his opinions. I don't agree with everything he says, but he says it well. His essays on "forgotten authors" are wonderful.

Groggy, #33 & 34. Eric Mayer and Mary Reed Mayer, Box 17143, Rochester, NY 14617. A semi-personal-zine from Eric, which has now expanded to include his wife Mary Reed.

Habakkuk #1-3. Bill Donaho, 626 58th St., Oakland, CA 94609 USA. A personalzine, with genzine overtones. Bill returns to fanzine fandom after several years in gaffation, and by the third issue has built up a strong following and lettercolumn.

The Hickman Zines. Lynn Hickman, 413 Ottokee Street, Wauseon, OH 43567-1133 USA. A collection of zines from Lynn's various publications in apas and such. They give a nice summary of what he's been doing and has done in his fannish life.

IBID. Ben Indick, 428 Sagamore Avenue, Teaneck, NJ 07666 USA. Ben's apazine for the Esoteric Order of Dagon. Lots of personal stuff, book reviews, and reprints of articles which Ben has written,

or he feels are of interest to fellow apa members.

Interviews with Costumers, Interviews in Fandom.

Dorothy Kurtz, T16, Coachman Manor Apts, Lindenwood, NJ 08021 USA. Dorothy does a fine job of interviewing costumers and fans she has met. If you want to know more about fandom, in particular the costuming, get these.

It Goes on the Shelf, #10-13. Ned Brooks, Sign of the Purple Mouth, 713 Paul Street, Newport News, VA 23605. Interesting zine mixing book reviews with letters received. Ned continues to request strong line art that will xerox/thermofax well.

Katmandu Visions #2. Jim Rittenhouse, PO Box A3398, Chicago IL 60690-3398 USA. The life and times (for the past four years) of Jim.

Karfian's Luncheon #118. Bruce Pelz, 15931 Kalisher St., Granada Hills, CA 91344 USA. Bruce's LASFAPazine in which he says he would be retiring in November, 1993. No wonder he's been traveling so much!

Knarley Knews, The, #40-48. Henry L Welch, 1525 16th Avenue, Grafton, WI 53024-2017 USA. Henry Welch (aka Knarley) continues to put together a little zine which is mostly a personalzine, although he encourages contributions.

Let's Fanac, #4. Barnaby Rapoport, PO Box 565, Storrs, CT 06268 USA. A personalzine, which has some interesting items, in particular, his conreport on CORFLU #9.

Barry R. Levin Science Fiction & Fantasy Literature 2265 Westwood Blvd, #669. Los Angeles, CA 90064 USA. Catalogues of rare collectable SF & F books for sale.

Lojgeornost #31-#37. Fred Lerner, 5 Worcester Ave, White River Junction, Vermont 05001 USA. Fred's FAPazine sent in as trade for LL. He has written some interesting tidbits about books, SF related items, and himself--#31 relates his trip to Budapest, #32 talks about his remembrances of Lester del Rey, and #33 is his trip to National parks on the West Coast.

Mainstream #16. Jerry Kaufman & Suzanne Tompkins, 8618 Linden Avenue North, Seattle WA 98103 USA. \$2/issue or the usual.

Marktime #29. A personalzine of Mark Strickert, 8765 W. Higgins Rd., Chicago, IL 60631 USA, which talks about his views and hobbies.

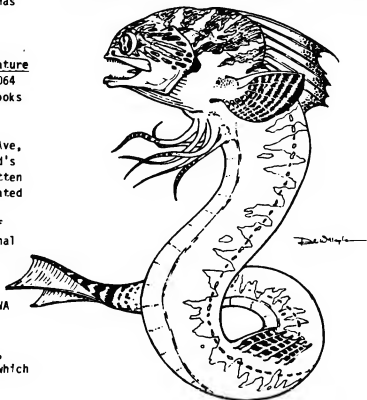
Matrix #105, 108, 109. Jenny & Steve Glover, 16 Aviary Place, Leeds LS12 2NP ENGLAND. The news magazine for the British Science Fiction Association. Very interesting reading about all aspects of British SF.

Maverick. Jenny Glover, 16 Aviary Place, Leeds LS12 2NP ENGLAND. A zine produced for CONADIAN. The intent is a literary discussion of seminal books. She hopes to meet many readers at INTERSECTION, the Glasgow Worldcon in 95.

Mentor, The, #78-85. Ron Clarke, PO Box K940, Haymarket, NSW 2000, AUSTRALIA. A mixture of articles, locs and fiction. Good, pleasant reading, with a variety of articles (one by Buck Coulson), reviews, a short stories, poetry and locs. Some excellent art by a variety of artists, and occasionally the covers are in color--beautifully produced. NOMINATE THIS ONE FOR A HUGO!!!

Metaphysical Review, The, #19/20/21. Bruce Gillespie, GPO Box 5195AA, Melbourne, Victoria 3001 AUSTRALIA. As usual, an excellent grouping of articles and comments about SF and related fields.

The Metcalf Zines. Norm Metcalf, PO Box 1368, Boulder Colorado 80306 USA. A collection of various zines Norm produces for apas, sent in exchange for LL. They are filled with interesting commentary about books and people in the SF field. They include: "The Devil's Work" #22-36, his FAPazine;



"Resin" #20-33, his SAPSzfne; "Sulph" #12-32, his PEAPSzfne, and "Tyndallite" #34-54, his SFPAszfne.

**Mimosa #14-16.** Dick & Nicki Lynch, PO Box 1350, Germantown, MD 20874 USA. An excellent genzfne, with lots of different articles to appeal to most people's tastes. Some very good artwork, especially the stuff by Steve Stiles, Sharon Farber, Diana Harlan Stein, Charlie Williams, and others.

**Munch Round Up #160 & 163.** Waldemar Kummig. Engadiner Str. 24/11, D 8000 Munchen 71, GERMANY. US agent is Andy Porter, PO Box 2730, Brooklyn, NY 11202056 USA. (\$1.75/issue, \$5/3 issues.) Contains conreports, fiction, reviews, etc.

**NASFA Shuttle** (May 1993-Dec 1994). NASFA, PO Box 4857, Huntsville, AL 35815-4857, USA. Current Editor: Nelda Kathleen Kennedy, 7907 Charlotte Drive SW, Huntsville, AL 35802 USA. The newsletter of the North Alabama Science Fiction Association. Locs, reviews, meeting & club news, etc. It continues to be interesting, and downright frustrating because it comes out monthly on schedule (like the now bi-monthly FOSFAX and The Reluctant Famulus).

**Nebula** Feb 1994. Lance Williams, The Nebulous Association, RD 1 Box 120 Lot 45, Tridaleph'a, WV 26059 USA. \$6/year, \$11/2 years, bi-monthly. Ohio Valley's gaming news magazine.

**Niekas #44.** Edmund R. Meskys, RFD 2, Box 63, Center Harbor, NH 03226-9729 USA. A professionally produced fanzine full of excellent commentary and reviews. This issue has a section devoted to Rudyard Kipling.

**Opuntia #20.2, 21.** Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary Alberta, T2P 2E7 CANADA. An irregularly produced personalzine, but very entertaining and lots of replies to Dale's comments.

**OtheRealms #32.** Chuq Von Rospach, 1072 Saratoga-Sunnyvale Rd, Bldg A107-503, San Jose, CA 95129 USA. Still one of the best reviewzines around, with an active lettercol.

**Pandora's Books Ltd #153.** Box 54, Neche, MD 58265 USA. Phone: (204) 324-8548. A catalogue of books available.

**Paperback Parade #37, 39.** Gary Lovisi, PO Box 209, Brooklyn, NY 11228-0209 USA. \$6/copy. A compendium of articles about paperbacks, collecting, interviews, etc. Wonderfully put together with covers reprinting some collectible paperback books.

**Penguin Dip #63.** Stephen H. Dorneman, 53 Hill Rd #705, Belmont, MA 02178 USA. \$15/year (10 issues). Various articles about SF, zine reviews, comics, and gaming. Nice writing by Lawrence Watt-Evans on Comics, and an active lettercol. Steve has some beautiful covers by a variety of artists. Steve is scheduling a shutdown of production of PD ending with issue #70.

**Pertinax #2, 3.** Hector Ramos, Apartado de Correos, 116.051, 28080 Madrid, SPAIN. An interesting zine with a variety of articles about Spanish fandom. Available for trade only.

**Proper Boskonian, #30.** Nesfa, Box G, MIT Branch PO, Cambridge, MA 02139. Semiannual. Well-produced clubzine—articles about cons, reviews, lettercolumn, etc. Some excellent art.

**Quantum #43/44.** Thrust Publications, 8217 Langport Terrace, Gaithersburg, MD 20877 USA. A professionally produced reviewzine, with interesting articles by well-known sf and fantasy writers.

**Quipu #4.** Vicki Rosenzweig, 33 Indian Road, 6-R, New York, NY 10034 USA. A personalzine produced on an irregular schedule, this specifically put together for distribution at LUNACON and CORFLU.

**Radio Free Thulcandra, #32-33.** Marty Helgesen, 11 Lawrence Avenue, Malverne, NY 11565-1406. A fanzine of Christian fandom, which is "an interdenominational fellowship of Christians and Science Fiction Fans interested in the courteous and accurate representation of Christian viewpoints in the fanish community." Lively discussions, though not quite my interest. I have not read this closely, so I have not participated in any of the discussions.

**Random Factors, 3754 W. 170th Ste,** Torrance, CA 90504-1204 USA; phone (310) 329-6772. A catalogue of folk music books and tapes available.

**Reasonable Freethinker, The #1-3.** Tom Feller, Box 13626, Jackson, MS 39326 USA. Articles and essays that spark interest and comment; many use free association in relating books and films, but they are well done and the references are topically related.

**Reluctant Famulus, The. #28-37.** Tom Sadler, 422 W. Maple Ave., Adrian, MI 49221. Bi-monthly. A fanzine with some reviews, but mostly personal observations on SF, fandom and conventions. More than very pleasant reading. TRF is becoming an excellent personalzine, with some features of genzines that I enjoy reading. There is also a

fflk column by a good friend. Tom is looking for submissions of art, articles and reviews. He just finished his sixth year of publishing, and is continuing with a regular schedule that very few fans have equalled.

Resnick at Zenith, Vol 1, #5-6. Doug Roemer, 674 Newbridge Ct., Arnold MD 21012 USA. If you want to know anything about what is going on with the publishing works of Mike Resnick, this is the fanzine to get. I enjoy each issue. Published 3 times/year; cost \$5/year, \$2 individual copy.

SF Bibliophile #5. A book catalogue from Japan.

SF Commentary, #73/74/75. Bruce Gillespie, 59 Keele Street, Collingwood, Victoria, 3066 AUSTRALIA. US\$30/5 issues. Some very detailed and excellent reviews and insights on books from the Australian viewpoint. Of interest to readers of SF. This has special articles on George Turner and Paul Voermans, and three articles written by Damien Broderick.

ScientiFiction, Winter 1993-Winter 1994. Mark Schulzinger, 601 E. Delmar, Springfield, MO 65807 USA. The clubzine of First Fandom; \$5/year.

Scopus: 3007, #4. Alexander Bouchard, PO Box 573, Hazel Park, MI 48030-0573 USA. At's foray into the fanzine field has stalled somewhat, since it was over a year since #3 came out. He needs contributions, so if you want a forum for your writing--nonfiction and fiction--send him something.

Semi-Circular of Janus, The, July 1993, January 1994. Greg & Linda Dunn, PO Box 19776, Indianapolis, IN 46219 USA. A clubzine for the Circle of Janus (which puts on INCONJUNCTION every year). Has the usual club stuff, but lots of interesting material--interviews with Mike Resnick, Fred Pohl and Robert J. Sawyer.

Sercon Popcult Litcrit Fanmag #4. Garth Spencer, PO Box 15335, VMPQ, Vancouver, BC, V6B 5B1 CANADA. A personalzine with interesting commentary about fandom, books, etc.

Set-Break Gazette, The. A one-shot from CONGENIAL V, edited by Michael Rawdon; no address given (though if you can find the 1sting for CONGENIAL, that would probably do).

Shuttle, The SFSES, #100, 103, 110. PO Box 70143, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33307 USA. "Official Newszine of the South Florida SF Society." Typical clubzine with news and reviews.

SIGMA #90-107. PARSEC, PO Box 3681, Pittsburgh, PA 15230-3681. The monthly newsletter of the Pittsburgh Area Science-fiction Enthusiasts Club. Lots of reviews, and some club business.

Smart-Ash #55. Tom Feller, editor, Chmneyville Fantasy & Science Fiction Society, Box 13626, Jackson MS 39236 USA. Quarterly, \$5/year. A clubzine, with multiple write-ups of the 1993 Worldcon in San Francisco, and other articles.

SNAFFU, December 1993-October 1994. A clubzine of the Las Vegas SF fans (and some gamers thrown in). PO Box 95941, Las Vegas, NV 89193 USA. Edited by Afleen Forman. Has had some good articles about local fan history.

Snarkin' Surfari #4-5. Barnaby Rapoport, PO Box 565, Storrs, CT 06268 USA. #4 is a letterzine. #5 has some interesting and strange musings from the mind of a somewhat original thinker; Barnaby does make me smile with his writing.

Solaris #106, 111. Joel Champetier, Case Postale 1589, Ville-Marie, Quebec, JOZ 3W0 CANADA. \$6/issue, \$23/year. This is the semi-prozine of French-speaking Canada. This is a nicely produced zine with reviews, stories, interviews, and lavish illustrations. Since it is written in French, I have trouble reading it, though I have made some progress based on my Latin background. Mafa can make some of it out and says it's nicely done. The French teachers at school continue to marvel at its quality.

Spektra, After the Flood. Lars-Arne Karlsson, Ekas Gallared, 310 60 Ullared, SWEDEN. This zine devoted to analyses of the Nebula nominees. I helped with their analysis of the Nebula nominees by making sure the editors had copies of the stories nominated. Sent in trade for LL.

Spent Brass, #20-26. Carrie Root & Andy Hooper, 4221 Francis Ave. N. #103, Seattle WA 98103 USA. \$1/2 issues. A small genzine/personalzine with interesting commentary on life and things fanish.

STET #8. Leah Zeldes Smith, 410 W. Willow Rd, Prospect Hts., IL 60070-1950. A personalzine and genzine from Leah, and her husband Dick.

Tales of the Unanticipated, #12-14. The literary magazine of the Minnesota Science Fiction Society. Eric M. Heldman, editor, PO Box 8036, Lake Street Station, Minneapolis, MN 55408 USA. Fiction and poetry actively solicited.

Tanstaaf! #1. Jeff Westbrook, 3014 Chelsea Circle, Ann Arbor, MI 48108 USA, and Larry Tucker, 3358 Chelsea Circle, Ann Arbor, MI 48108 USA. Free to Stilyagi members, \$1.50/issue or the usual. A sorta club zine, with lots of information about conventions.

Texas SF Inquirer #49-52. Alexander R. Slate, 8603 Shallow Ridge Drive, San Antonio, TX 78239 USA. The newszine and magazine of Central Texas. Typical clubzine, but it has some good articles, interviews and reviews.

Thingummybob #7-11. Chuck Conner, Sildan House, Chedistan Road, Wissett near Halesworth, Suffolk, IP19 0NF, ENGLAND. A fanzine about fanzines and fandom, particularly in England. It occasionally sports specific themes, and also contains some personal stuff.

Thomana #1. A FAPazine from Jurgen Thomann, Breslauer Str. 16, D-79576 Weil am Rhein GERMANY.

Tightbeam #185-187. Diane Miller, 5311 Chestnut St., Grand Forks, ND 58201-8007. The NSF clubzine, with reviews, comments, lettercolumn and the works.

Tijdlijn, De #7, 8, 9. Peter Motte, Abdijstraat 33, B-9500 Geraardsbergen, BELGIUM. A personal newszine with information about Belgium fandom.

Timbre #7. Tim Jones, 20 Gillespie St., Dunedin, Aotearoa, NEW ZEALAND. Tim returns after a three year absence. He has articles about music, and some groups in New Zealand.

Trapdoor, #13 & 14. Robert Lichtman, PO Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442. One of the best little fanzines around. Robert gets a lot of nice interesting articles. This is a perennial Hugo nominee for me.

Uncle Hugo's SF Bookstore / Uncle Edgar's Mystery Bookstore. Newsletter #21-26. A newsletter (obviously) of books published, received and for sale at these two stores owned by Don Blyly. There are some reviews included, both short and a little longer.

Vector, The critical Journal of the British Science Fiction Association. Catie Carey, 224 Southway, Park Barn, Guilford, Surrey, GU2 6DN ENGLAND.

Warp Factor #25. Chris Chartier, PO Box 311, STN "B", Montreal, Quebec, H3B 3J7 CANADA. A parody issue of a media newszine. Some funny stuff here, but you do need to know about the various shows being parodied.

Wail Songs, 1993 Catalogue. Wail Songs, PO Box 29888, Oakland, CA 94604, USA. A catalogue for flik tapes produced by Wail Songs. Prices for tapes range from \$8-\$12 and flik books are also available.

Weber Woman's Wrevenge, Vol 7, #5-6: Vol 8, #1-3. Jean Weber, 6 Hillcrest Avenue, Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, Australia. Wonderfully written, feminist oriented (though not exclusively) fanzine. I enjoy it immensely.

Joe Wesson Magazine -- several issues (not numbered, but dated). Joe Wesson, 80 Riverside Drive, Canton, NY 13617 USA. A personalzine about Joe's life and happenings; an active lettercol. I've been meaning to write Joe for some time. Maybe I will...now.

Whimsy #7. A personalzine from Jeanne Gomoll, 2825 Union Street, Madison WI 53704 USA. It's been too long a gap since the last one of Jeanne's zine. This one is a treasure.

Whole Fanzine Catalogue, The #31. Brian Earl Brown, 11675 Beaconsfield, Detroit MI 48224 USA. \$1 or trade. Has reviews of lots and lots of fanzines. This is what you get if you want to know about the different zines in SF fandom.

Wild Heirs #2. Arnie Katz 33 South Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107 USA. A compilation fanzine of stuff done at the club July social together with articles about LV fandom and fandom in general.

YHOS #53. Art Widner, 231 Courtney Lane, Orinda, CA 94563, USA. As Art's FAPazine, he does a remarkable fanzine. The articles are interesting and thoughtful, and not just by him. He has an irregular column by rich brown, and presents fan news and gossip on all fronts.

Zero-G Lavatory, The #1 & 2. Scott Patri, Box 1196, Cumberland, British Columbia V0R 1S0 CANADA. A personalzine with some reviews by Mog Sasquatch.

Zugzwang #1. Kim Huett, PO Box 679, Woden, ACT 2606, AUSTRALIA. A personalzine, which has hopes of being franked through SAPS.



# Pulp and Celluloid

Reviews of books, movies, tapes, songbooks and so on by  
Bill Bacher, Lan, Evelyn C Leeper and Mark R Leeper.

## Books

Bishop, Michael.....	<i>Bitter Innings</i> [ECL] 74
Brust, Steven.....	<i>Agyar</i> [ECL] 75
Bujold, Lois McMaster.....	<i>Mirror Dance</i> [Lan] 96
Bury, Stephen.....	<i>Interface</i> [ECL] 76
Datlow, Ellen & Terri Windling.....	<i>Snow White, Blood Red</i> [ECL] 72
Gould, Steven.....	<i>Juniper</i> [ECL] 72
Hogan, James P.....	<i>Out of Time</i> [ECL] 68
Jabokov, Alexander.....	<i>The Breath of Suspension</i> [ECL] 74
Kress, Nancy.....	<i>Aliens of Earth</i> [ECL] 72
Mason, Lisa.....	<i>Summer of Love</i> [ECL] 71
McHugh, Maureen F.....	<i>Half the Day Is Night</i> [Lan] 97
Newman, Kim.....	<i>Anno Dracula</i> [ECL] 67
Nolan, William F.....	<i>Three for Space</i> [Lan] 104
Oberndorf, Charles.....	<i>Testing</i> [ECL] 68
Preuss, Paul.....	<i>Core</i> [MRL] 80
Ramsland, Katherine.....	<i>The Vampire Companion: The Official Guide to Anne Rice's "The Vampire Chronicles"</i> [MRL] 94
Resnick, Mike & Martin H. Greenberg.....	<i>By Any Other Name</i> [ECL] 71
Resnick, Mike.....	<i>Inferno</i> [Lan] 96
Resnick, Mike.....	<i>A Miracle of Rare Design</i> [Lan] 105
Ryman, Geoff.....	<i>Child Garden</i> [ECL] 76
Severance, Carol.....	<i>Reefsong</i> [Lan] 96
Stewart, Sean.....	<i>Passion Play</i> [ECL] 69
Turtledove, Harry.....	<i>Guns of the South</i> [Lan] 99
Turtledove, Harry.....	<i>The Case of the Toxic Spell Dump</i> [ECL] 70
Turtledove, Harry.....	<i>World War: In the Balance</i> [ECL] 77
Wentworth, K.D.....	<i>Moonspeaker</i> [Lan] 103
Willis, Connie.....	<i>Impossible Things</i> [ECL] 67
Willis, Connie.....	<i>Uncharted Territory</i> [ECL] 68
Wilson, Robert Charles.....	<i>Mysterium</i> [ECL] 73
Wurts, Janny.....	<i>Curse of the Mistwraith</i> [Lan] 100

## Films, Videos, & Plays

<i>Clear and Present Danger</i> .....	[MRL] 79
<i>Cronos</i> .....	[MRL] 81
<i>Crow, The</i> .....	[MRL] 91
<i>Doomsday Gun, The</i> .....	[MRL] 81
<i>Enemy Within, The</i> .....	[MRL] 82
<i>House of the Spirits, The</i> .....	[MRL] 84
<i>Household Saints</i> .....	[MRL] 78
<i>It Could Happen to You</i> .....	[MRL] 85
<i>Julien Duvivier's The Golem (1936)</i> .....	[MRL] 83
<i>Maverick</i> .....	[MRL] 91
<i>Mr. Vampire</i> .....	[MRL] 90
<i>Nosferatu the Vampire (1978)</i> .....	[MRL] 86
<i>Red Rock West</i> .....	[MRL] 92
<i>Shadow, The</i> .....	[MRL] 88
<i>Slingshot, The</i> .....	[MRL] 93
<i>Widows' Peak</i> .....	[MRL] 94
<i>Wolf</i> .....	[MRL] 89

## Tapes and Songbooks

Anderson, Kevin J.....	<i>Jedi Search</i> [MRL] 86
Becker, Fred.....	<i>Inner, Stellar</i> [Lan] 101
<i>Crosstown Bus</i> .....	[Lan] 102
Dandelion Wine.....	<i>Cheap Hooch</i> [Lan] 100
Duras Sisters, The.....	<i>Masquerading as Human</i> [Lan] 102
Freeman, Nancy Louise.....	<i>Shouting Theater in a Crowded Fire</i> [Lan] 97
Macdonald, Steve.....	<i>Songspinner</i> [Lan] 98
Mar, Kathy & Zander Nyrand.....	<i>Made by Magic</i> [Lan] 103
On the Mark.....	<i>To the Point</i> [BB] 105
<i>Pegasus Winners, Collection One, The.....</i>	<i>tape and songbook</i> [Lan] 99
Simser, Glenn.....	<i>Ten Years of Filk</i> [Lan] 100
Smith, Tom.....	<i>Domino Death</i> [Lan] 98
Sutton, Bill & Brenda.....	<i>Owling at the Moon</i> [Lan] 99
Urban Tapestry.....	<i>The Urban Tapestry Songbook</i> [Lan] 104
Warner, Larry.....	<i>Larry Warner on Deck #11</i> [Lan] 102
<i>Woad Warrior</i> .....	[Lan] 101
Yeomans, Andrea.....	<i>The Magic Carpet Songbook</i> [Lan] 103



## Book Reviews by Evelyn C. Leeper

### Anno-Dracula

by Kim Newman

Carroll & Graf, ISBN 0-88184-967-7, 1993,  
US\$21.

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What if Van Helsing had not been successful and Dracula had survived and gone on to marry Queen Victoria? Okay, it sounded like an unlikely premise, but let's face it: those readers who can't accept the premise aren't going to read the book in the first place.

Newman has postulated a London split into two factions: the undead and the "warm." Gradually the undead—now living openly—are taking over society. Those who speak or act against them are sent to concentration camps or impaled upon stakes. Sherlock Holmes, for example, has been incarcerated in Devil's Dyke on Sussex Downs. (I should warn Holmes fans who hear of this book that while Lestrade is a genuine character in the action, Holmes is merely mentioned a couple of times. And, no, Lestrade is not "the vampire Lestrade," as one wit suggested.) In addition to Dracula and Sherlock Holmes, we also have Dr. Moreau and Dr. Jekyll, as well as Jack the Ripper and a plethora of vampires, both historical and fictional. All these well-known characters tend to get in the way of the story at times, which is actually quite engrossing without the "spot-the-reference" game. (The Jack the Ripper subplot is critical to the book, however.)



I initially picked this up because it was both an alternate history and a Sherlock Holmes novel, but its strengths lie in neither of those areas, but in its craftsmanship as a vampire novel in the spirit of Bram Stoker's

*Dracula*, as well as John Polidori's *Vampyre* and James Malcolm Rymer's *Varney the Vampire*. Its closest resemblance to a Sherlock Holmes story is in its capturing the feel of Victorian London, albeit a somewhat transformed Victorian London. If you find this description at all intriguing, I recommend you seek out *Anno-Dracula*.

### Impossible Things

by Connie Willis

Bantam Spectra, ISBN 0-553-56436-6, 1994,  
\$5.99.

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This is the new collection of Connie Willis stories.

Oh, that isn't enough to explain why you should run out and buy it?

How about the fact that the eleven stories here have collected seven Hugo nominations (with two wins) and five Nebula nominations (with three wins)? Still waiting? Jeez, what a demanding audience.

Okay, for those of you who want hard science fiction, there's "Schwarzschild Radius." For horror fans, we have "Jack," a somewhat different look at the London Blitz. For the conspiracy theorists, there's "Winter's Tale," about who really wrote Shakespeare's plays. For those who are fed up with political correctness, try "Even the Queen" and "Ado." The former takes a somewhat nonstandard approach to "women's liberation"; the latter says that at the rate we're going, "Winter's Tale" will become irrelevant. And for those who have ever attended a science fiction convention, "At the Rialto" will have a real ring of familiarity.

"Chance" and "Time Out" both deal with how we look at the past and lost opportunities, and both also reflect the perspective of the "housewife," a term that Willis has often applied to herself. "In the Late Cretaceous" displays her knowledge of the world of academia (as do many of the other stories as well)—the faults and foibles of our education



system seem to be a recurring theme in Willis's work). And "The Last of the Winnebagoes" and "Spice Pogrom" round out the lineup.

If it seems that eleven stories isn't very much for 496 pages, it's because Willis writes as many novellas and novelettes as she does short stories. Indeed, last year she was nominated for the Hugo in all three categories, a unique achievement. (In 1971, Harlan Ellison was nominated in both of the two short fiction categories that existed then, but no one other than Willis has hit three in a year.) And Willis seems to know which length to use for which stories: her short stories never seem abrupt, nor her novellas padded.

I highly recommend *Impossible Things*. (Her previous collection, *Firewatch*, is supposed to be reissued as well, and I recommend that also.)

## Uncharted Territory

by Connie Willis

Bantam Spectra, ISBN 0-553-56294-0, July 1994, 149pp., US\$3.99.

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*Quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus.*

Or, for the classically impaired, "Sometimes even good old Homer nods." [Horace]

Anyone who's read my reviews knows I am a fan of Connie Willis's writing. So of course I looked forward to this, especially after hearing the first part read at Boskone last year. Alas, *Uncharted Territory* did not live up to my expectations.

*Uncharted Territory* is another of Willis's jibes at "PC" (political correctness, not personal computers). She can do this very well (as in "Ado"), but here the jokes fall flat, at least for me. It may be that the make the novella length there had to be a bit too much padding. Willis can write well at any length, but I suspect here she had to write at novella length and the story wouldn't support it. Here her target is those who want to preserve planetary ecosystems and protect indigenous cultures from technological contamination—only here the indigenous peoples know a good thing when they see one.

But around this Willis has added a romantic triangle—well, more like a pentagon, with three veteran surveyors, a new surveyor, and an alien. This part seemed unnecessary to the rest of the story.

Of course, I can't be totally negative on this. It

has its moments, and some of the interplay is quite funny.

And after all, one of the main characters is named Evelyn.

## Out of Time

by James P. Hogan

Bantam Spectra, ISBN 0-553-29971-9, 1993, US\$3.00.

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This could be described as a story that fell through a time warp—it reads like the old "science puzzler" stories you used to see in the 1950s. A strange phenomenon has struck New York. Time is out of joint (with apologies to Philip K. Dick)—everyone's clock or watch seems to be running at a different speed, with the result that people find themselves losing time. For example, their watch says an hour has passed, but the clock at City Hall says two hours have passed. (One assumes everyone is syncing up with the sun, though this is never actually stated.) Joe Kopelsky is trying to find out why this is happening and how to stop it. Along the way he meets the same stereotyped and clichéd characters one would have found in the 1950s: a German scientist (complete with thick accent), an Irish priest (complete with thick brogue), and so on. (If it is politically incorrect to write racially stereotyped characters, why is it apparently not politically incorrect to write nationally stereotyped ones?)

In any case, this is not a book one reads for the characterization. Hogan's solution is derived from one way of expressing the laws of physics, but he may be taking some philosophical concepts too literally for this to be strictly science fiction. There is a certain element of fantasy here (in my opinion), or at least the sort of scientific "babble-speak" that *Star Trek* has become known for. This book is a definite departure from the usual literary bent of this series of novellas, and will probably disappoint the series' regular readers, while not reaching the audience for the 1950s nostalgia that it seems to be.

## Testing

by Charles Obermendorf

Bantam Spectra, ISBN 0-553-56181-2, 1993, US\$3.99.

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This is yet another in Bantam Spectra's excel-

lent series of novellas. In a future after the "Great Fall" (apparently an economic and social collapse), students undergo morality training and testing. The training reminded me of the classes in Robert A. Heinlein's *Starship Troopers*; the testing reminded me of the old Ted Thomas story "Test" about a driving test. This is not a bad thing—science fiction has a grand tradition of building on and responding to what came before. One thing that doesn't seem to have changed with the Great Fall is that high school classes concentrate more on rote learning than on thinking, more on having the "right" answer, even when they pay lip service to independent thought. If Oberndorf has a moral to his story, it's that ethics and morality have to come from within through self-examination; they can't be "taught" like geometry or Latin. (Of course, that's just the moral I concluded through my reasoning that he was proposing; your mileage may vary, and that's probably the point as well.)

One touch I liked which may not have been intentional: The headmaster of the school says, "...our Great Fall had deeper meaning than a simple economic collapse. Although many in this country are not Christian and worship God in their own way, our tradition is Judeo-Christian. When we say *fall*, we think of Adam and Eve and their fall from grace. And the Great Fall was our nation's fall from grace." The seeming afterthought to make "Christian" into "Judeo-Christian," especially since Judaic tradition does not have the concept of the "fall from

grace" that Christianity has or the headmaster claims, is precisely typical of using formulae instead of thinking about what is being said. I hear it now, and it seems likely to continue, even after the "Great Fall."

Oberndorf also postulates an interesting new family structure. I don't think it particularly likely—especially in a society still waving the flag of "Judeo-Christian tradition"—but I'm willing to grant the possibility for the sake of the story. As in his first work, *Sheltered Lives*, Oberndorf is examining society and morality in a more direct way than one usually finds in science fiction, and I recommend *Testing*.

## Passion Play

by Sean Stewart

Ace, ISBN 0-441-65241-7, 1993, US\$4.50.

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I find science fictional looks at religion intriguing, and in that category I would include future theocracies. *Passion Play* is about a near-future America that is a theocracy, having been taken over by the Redemptionists. The "reds" (as they are somewhat confusingly called) have taken over the entertainment media as well, and everything is now instructive or uplifting. The Reds seem to have some idea of art—though movies and such financed by religious groups now don't seem to show much evidence of this—and it is during the production of a version of *Faust* that the murder which forms the core of the book's plot occurs. The story is told in the first person by an independent investigator (who has some semi-psychic powers which are never explained).

Reading the book, I felt like a stone skipping over the surface of a lake. There's too much "stuff" in this short book to have any of it examined in depth. The Redemptionist government, the religious structure (what happened to all the non-Christians in the new United States?), new uses of the media (along with a distrust in technology approaching the neo-Luddite level—how do these contradictory ideas get resolved?), puritanism (along with drugs and sex)—all these are touched on, but never examined or even made consistent. And wrapping all this around a murder mystery confuses the issue. There's too much the reader is trying to figure out about the background to give him or her a fair chance at figuring out the crime. (Yes, I know a murder mystery is not necessarily a puzzle. Still, it



does seem as though the science fiction nature of this merely mystifies the reader further.) *Passion Play* suffers from a super-abundance of aspects. I rarely find myself complaining that a book is too short, but Stewart needed either to lengthen the book or cut back on the various changes introduced. (It's also possible that an "expository lump" explaining some of what was going on might have made the rest less confusing.) *Passion Play* is an intriguing novel, but ultimately disappointing. (In fairness, I show note that many people have liked it more than I, and it did win the Aurora Award for Best Canadian Science Fiction Novel in English. But my reaction was that it showed a lot of promise, but didn't deliver on it.)

## The Case of the Toxic Spell Dump

by Harry Turtledove

Baen, ISBN 0-671-72196-8, 1993, US\$5.99,

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This is, I suppose, an alternate history of sorts. Magic works, all the gods and goddesses and other supernatural beings are real, and so on. Yet except for a few minor name changes (the District of Columbia is the District of Saint Columba, for example, and Los Angeles is Angel City), everything else is pretty much the same. While this is extremely unlikely in a real alternate history (is that an oxymoron?), it hardly matters here however, since this story is **not** trying to be a classic alternate history story. I mention it only for those who have come to expect Turtledove to write alternate history stories.

There are two aspects to this book: plot and puns. The plot involves David Fisher, an inspector for the EPA (Environmental Perfection Agency) and his investigation of a possible leak at a toxic spell dump. This leak appears to be causing babies to be born without souls. The puns are layered on top of the plot—often, in my opinion, obscuring it completely. It's too easy to get so wrapped up in spotting puns that you stop following the storyline. And Turtledove is shameless when it comes to puns. Not only does he refer to an overweight psychic and a Brütcher who contacts spirits from the past as "the large medium and the English chan-neler," but he doesn't shirk from talking about the "devil with a blue dress on" or even including as narrative almost an entire verse of "Love Potion Number Nine." It may seem an odd criticism, but I

think Turtledove's plot is interesting enough that the constant puns hurt, rather than help, the book. Conversely, the puns are good enough that you sometimes wish the plot didn't distract you from them. I like sushi and I like hot fudge, but they don't mix well either.

One aspect of the premise I found fascinating, if a bit paradoxical, was the idea that all religions were "right." With the constant proof of them in everyday life, people in Turtledove's universe are more religious—because they really believe that they will be punished if they're not. Aside from what ramifications this has for free will and faith versus proof, it leads me to wonder why the god(s) of one religion don't (or can't) punish the believers in a different religion. David Fisher is an observant Jew (actually another nice touch—one rarely finds the heroes of novels to be observant Jews, or even observant anything-else), but why? He recognizes that all other religions are "true," so why does he remain Jewish? Is conversion not allowed? If so, what does that do to religions that require "in-formed consent" (i.e., you can become a full member only when you are old enough to make your own choice)? Do these religions never form in this universe? Does it have only religions one is born into? (Or baptized into at birth?) Maybe this whole subject interests me because I've been reading about why people change their religion and it seems to be more a social or emotional thing than that they decide they actually believe the formal tenets of one religion over another. (Lots of stuff here in case there's a sequel, I guess.) At any rate, Turtledove gives one a lot of food for thought here, and this may be somewhat of a surprise in a book that is



basically a comedy-adventure. It may be just my personal taste for religious-based science fiction and fantasy, but I found *The Case of the Toxic Spell Dump* enjoyable and surprisingly meaty. If you have an appreciation—or at least a high tolerance—for endless puns, I strongly recommend it.

## By Any Other Fame

Edited by Mike Resnick and Martin H. Greenberg

DAW, ISBN 0-88677-594-9, 1994, US\$4.99.  
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I like to read alternate histories. Many people use the terms "alternate history," "alternate universe/world," and "parallel universe/world" interchangeably, but they are not the same. Alternate histories are about history. Maybe I'm just being contentious, but a re-telling of *The Maltese Falcon* with Gypsy Rose Lee as the detective is not, to my mind, about history.

Now to be fair, I should say that *By Any Other Fame* is not billed as an anthology of alternate history stories. It's billed as an anthology of "23 alternate futures of the world's most famous and infamous celebrities"—a description equally inaccurate, since almost all of the stories are set in the past. DAW's back-cover label of them as "What if?" stories is more accurate, though the fact that Golda Meir's name is misspelled in the blurb suggests that accuracy is not a high priority there in any case.

Given, therefore, that I read alternate history stories for the historical content, I have to say that I found *By Any Other Fame* disappointing. The best story—and perhaps even the only good story—is Kristine Kathryn Rusch's "Sinner-Saints," about Lillian Hellman, Dashiell Hammett, and the House Un-American Activities Committee with-hunts of the 1950s. There's history, there's characterization, there's meat—all missing from most of the other stories. The only other story I enjoyed was "A Bubble for a Minute" by Dean Wesley Smith, in which the main character discovers that history may not be what it seems, and that it's far from dead. It uses an old idea, but Smith executes it well. (The same idea is used by Janet Kagan in "Space Cadet," which immediately follows "A Bubble for a Minute"—very poor placement in my opinion, since it forces the reader to compare the two. Kagan's piece also strikes me as derivative of Pamela Sargent's "Danny Goes to Mars" and has the same mean-spiritedness of the latter. I am no fan of the

main character of these stories, but I still see the stories as somewhat childish attacks.)

Twelve stories—more than half the stories in the book—center around Hollywood stars or other figures in the entertainment industry. And too many of them have not just one person following a different path, but several, and for apparently unrelated causes. Where is Occam's Razor when you need it? Also too prevalent are familiar stories retold with other participants (e.g., Gypsy Rose Lee in "The Fifteen-Minute Falcon" and Amelia Earhart in "The Defiant Disaster"). Laura Resnick's "Under a Sky More Fiercely Blue" has at least some relation to history, as does Michelle Sagara's "Four Attempts at a Letter" (though this is more musings on an alternate event than the possible outcomes of it) and Barry N. Malzberg's "Hitler at Nuremberg."

I suppose the cover illustration (Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley, Humphrey Bogart, and film sprockets) should have given me a clue, but I have to say I found this a disappointing anthology and hope that Resnick's future "alternate" anthologies go back to the history part. When they focus on history, they're some of the best around. (It's also true that his more historical ones seem to have been done for Tor, so it may be that he has different types of anthologies for different publishers. It is true that Resnick seems to have suggested topics to the authors for many of the stories, so perhaps he was aiming for something less historical here.)

## Summer of Love

by Lisa Mason

Bantam Spectra, ISBN 0-553-37330-7, June 1994, 400pp, US\$12.95.  
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Why is this a science fiction novel?

Yes, I know it's because a time traveler from the 25th Century has come to San Francisco in the summer of 1967 to ensure that certain events occur which will save the world from total ecological catastrophe. But since this part of the plot is the worst executed and most predictable aspect of the whole novel, and since it could be removed entirely without hurting the rest of the novel—in fact, probably improving it—one wonders why it's there. My guess is that Mason tried to sell a straight "Summer of Love" novel and couldn't find a publisher for it, so she added the science fiction element to make it more marketable.

The result is an odd book, which is reasonably

good as a look back at the "Summer of Love" in both its good and its bad aspects (at least as far as I can tell—I spent the summer of 1967 in Chicopee, Massachusetts, doing volunteer work in the library), but fails badly as a science fiction novel. It's full of references to "Star Trek" and other science fiction, including references to all the works it's imitating, so in case you didn't realize it was predictable, it reminds you! Recommended if you want to read about San Francisco in 1967 (and can ignore the science fictional aspect), but **not** as a science fiction novel.

## Jumper

by Steven Gould

Tor, ISBN 0-812-52237-0, 1993 (1992c),  
344pp, US\$4.99.

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When I told a friend I was reading this, his response was, "It's not alternate history; it's not literary. Why are you reading it?" Well, even I have to have a change of pace once in a while.

*Jumper* is a classic adventure-type, wish-fulfillment story. Seventeen-year-old Davy Rice discovers one day that he has the ability to "jump" (teleport). (In a nod to Alfred Bester's *The Stars My Destination*, he discovers this when he first jumps accidentally to avoid a beating. Gould credits Bester and other authors in his acknowledgment.) After experimenting a bit, Rice discovers he can jump at will, but only to places he can visualize. (Now you know who buys all those one-way tickets!) At first he uses this power somewhat frivolously, but then turns it to more serious purpose.

One can't demand too much realism from what is essentially an adolescent power fantasy (could he really outsmart **everyone** in the CIA?), and if you turn off your objections to such details you can have a lot of fun with this book. My one caveat is that although this description makes *Jumper* sound like a juvenile/young adult novel, there are scenes of violence, and abuse is an on-going theme. With that warning, I recommend this book.

## The Aliens of Earth

by Nancy Kress

Arkham House, ISBN 0-87054-166-8, 1993,  
327pp, US\$20.95.

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This book of eighteen stories is Nancy Kress's

second collection. (The first, *Trinity and Other Stories*, was published in 1985 by Bluejay and is out of print.) This one includes the two Hugo-nominated stories "And Wild for to Hold" and "The Mountain to Mohammed." ("And Wild for to Hold" was competing with Kress's "Beggars in Spain" in its year, and when the latter won, Kress was presented with a button that read, "I lost the Hugo to Nancy Kress.")

All but one of the stories in *The Aliens of Earth* share one common element: they take place on Earth (hence the title). Beyond that they range from horror ("To Scale" and "Philippa's Hands") to fantasy ("Spillage") to straight science fiction ("People Like Us" and "The Mountain to Mohammed"). Though no medical training is listed in Kress's biographical data, many of her stories deal with disease and the medical profession: "Inertia" has the victims of a disfiguring plague in a quarantine camp; "The Mountain to Mohammed" deals with the allocation of medical care in the future "Cannibals" looks at the dying-off of an alien species; "In Memoriam" examines a new treatment for the elderly. Time travel and parallel worlds are also common themes ("The Price of Oranges" and "And Wild for to Hold"). "The Battle of Long Island" combines the two, being a story of parallel worlds told in the setting of a battlefield hospital.

My personal favorite is "The Price of Oranges," but all the stories are excellent examples of how we are the "aliens of earth." I recommend this collection.

(Note: Kress's *Beggars in Spain*, an expansion of her Hugo-winning novella, has just been released in paperback by AvoNova. I recommend that as well.)

## Snow White, Blood Red

Edited by Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling

AvoNova, ISBN 0-380-71875-8, 1993,  
411pp, US\$4.99.

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There is a revival in the fairy tale (or *märchen*, to use the German word, since as Windling points out in her introduction, there is no true English equivalent). One even sees panels on them at science fiction conventions—and not in the children's programming. The twenty authors here have also returned them to their adult origins after decades (or more) of being watered down for children (though



some—Hansel and Gretel, for example—would be hard to sanitize without destroying them completely).

The authors split about fifty/fifty on how they do this. Some retain the ancient, never-never land settings for their stories. Others move them into modern cities and give their characters urban apartments and VCRs instead of cottages and magic mirrors. This follows the pattern of the "Fairy Tale" books that Windling edits, and *Snow White, Blood Red* could be considered as part of that series. (It's not officially, of course, since the series name is owned by Tor. Still if there were no labels on the books, this would certainly **look** like part of the same series, especially with the gorgeous Tom Canty cover.) I never thought of myself as a fan of fairy tales, so I was somewhat surprised to find myself enjoying several of these stories. Not all, mind you, and the ones I enjoyed seemed to be mostly the ones that frame an old fairy tale in a modern setting. (I've also recently enjoyed *The War for the Oaks* by Emma Bull, *Jack the Giant-Killer* by Charles de Lint, and *Briar Rose* by Jane Yolen, the latter two also from the "Fairy Tale" series.) Even if you are not a fantasy reader, you might want to give the stories in *Snow White, Blood Red* a try. Or perhaps especially if you're not a fantasy reader, since it almost seems to have been designed as an introduction to the modern fairy tale, complete with essays by Windling and Datlow, and a recommended reading list at the end. (The latter,

by the way, lists several out-of-print books, but inexplicably—to me, anyway—omits the Charles Lang "Fairy Books," which are where my mother first read her fairy tales and are still in print from Dover.)

## Mysterium

by Robert Charles Wilson  
Bantam Spectra, ISBN 0-553-37365-X, 1994,  
288pp, US\$11.95.  
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I have liked all of Robert Charles Wilson's previous books (*The Hidden Place*, *Memory Wire*, *Gypsies*, *The Divide*, *The Bridge of Years*, and *Harvest*), which is even more interesting when you consider how widely they vary. *The Hidden Place* is a fantasy set in a hobo camp during the Great Depression, *Memory Wire* is a science fiction story of cybernetics in 21st Century Brazil, *Gypsies* is about the military trying to use children who can "sidestep" into other worlds, *The Divide* is about the experimental enhancement of intelligence, *The Bridge of Years* is about time travel, and *Harvest* is about aliens who come to transform the human race into something higher. If there's a pattern here, I don't see it. (And lest there be any confusion, this book is **not** by the co-author of the "Illuminati" books. That is Robert Anton Wilson.)

And now we have *Mysterium*, a book based on gnosticism. I must admit that gnosticism in the early Christian church is not one of my strong points. From a historical perspective, I know that gnosticism led in part to Manichaeism and the religion of the Bogomils, but I am less clear on their doctrines, so I have to take *Mysterium* based on what Wilson conveys within it. (I hope he's more accurate on gnosticism than on mathematics—where he refers to the "anthropic principle in the language of set theory"—or physics—where he describes a thirty-degree incline as "not steep.") Of course, one might claim that since one of the basic principles of gnosticism is hidden knowledge Wilson doesn't have to convey it clearly. After all, in Luke 8:10 it is said, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand," a very gnostic concept. The town of Two Rivers, Michigan, is happy when the government builds a secret laboratory nearby, disappointed when they discover the employees won't be pumping money into the

local economy, and surprised when they wake up one morning to discover that their entire town has been transported to a world like theirs—but different. Their country—whatever it is—seems to be at war with New Spain, and the Proctors have arrived to bring the town under control. No one is quite sure what has happened, but Howard Poole is sure it has something to do with his uncle, Alan Stern.

The three parts of *Mysterium* are entitled “Mysterium,” “Mysterium Tremendae,” and “Axis Mundis” (reminiscent of the three sections of *A Canticle for Leibowitz*). Each begins with a brief excerpt from Stern’s diary, heavy on the Greek terms but somewhat helpful in understanding the religious basis not only of this new world but also of the book itself. Because gnosticism is the key to what’s happened to the town of two rivers.

I have a couple of minor quibbles. Given the time of the “world-split,” it seems unlikely that names such as Boston and Meso-America would be used. (Wilson attempts to explain this by having Graham note, “The movements of people, the evolution of language. It’s as though history wants to flow in certain channels. Broad ethnic groupings persist, and there are roughly analogous wars, at least up until the tenth or eleventh century. There are plagues, though they follow different patterns. The Black Death depopulated Europe and Asia no less than five times,” but I’m not convinced.) And his science is sloppy (see my comments about set theory and thirty-degree slopes earlier). But in spite of these problems, I found *Mysterium* to be an engrossing novel. I may not believe the religious underpinnings of it, but then the same was true of *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, and that didn’t stop me from liking that. This uses religion slightly differently, of course, but read it for yourself to see how.

## *Brittle Innings*

by Michael Bishop

Bantam Spectra, ISBN 0-553-08136-5, April 1994, 502pp, US\$21.95.  
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I am not a baseball fan (or indeed, a fan of any sport), so when I first heard that Michael Bishop was writing a novel about minor league baseball in the South during World War II, my ears didn’t immediately perk up. But I kept hearing recommendations and praise for it, so when it arrived, I decided to give it a try.

Sometimes I make the right decisions.

*Brittle Innings* is good—very good. Though baseball is the background, *Brittle Innings* is not about baseball; it is about what makes us human, what makes us the same—and what makes us different. To do this, Bishop uses not only the metaphor of baseball, but all the parallels of his theme in the racial segregation of the era. The various characters each have his or her place in society, and this place is often independent of any rational basis. That may sound trite, but in Bishop’s hands, it is not, and he skillfully uses the hidden true nature of background of his characters to show how we often make decisions based on incomplete or incorrect assessments of people. The story takes place in 1943, when Danny Boles, fresh out of high school in Oklahoma, is signed for the Highbridge (Georgia) Hellbenders, a class C farm club. When he arrives, however, he has been struck mute by an incident on his journey and is forced to begin his stay as more of an observer and less of a participant than might normally be the case. His interaction with his teammates, especially Jumbo Hank Clerval, form a window into the world of human relationships. There is more I could say about *Brittle Innings*, but I don’t want to reveal too much of the plot.

Bishop also conveys a wonderful sense of time and place—you feel as if you are in the hot and dusty 1940s South as you read *Brittle Innings*. And in addition to the main part of the novel (written as Danny’s first-person narrative), there are also sections written from another voice, in a totally different style, which describe a totally different time and place. These, too, are excellent, and the combination of the two provides yet another level of meaning. I heartily recommend this book, not only for now, but also as a strong contender when Hugo time comes around.

## *The Breath of Suspension*

by Alexander Jablokov

Arkham House, ISBN 0-87054-167-6, 1994, 318pp, US\$20.95.  
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Major publishers, I am told, don’t like to bring out single-author collections. They don’t sell well enough in most cases to satisfy whatever profitability formula the publishers use. What single-author collections one does see from major publishers are usually from only the biggest authors—multi-



Hugo- and Nebula-winners who have the clout (and draw) to convince the publishers that an occasional collection is part of the package if they want the novels as well.

All this is by way of explanation as to why science fiction fans should be thankful that there exist smaller publishers such as Mark Zeising, NESFA Press, and Arkham House who bring out single-author collections which may not be wildly successful, but serve to make available the otherwise unavailable short fiction of noted authors. Zeising has produced a Pat Cadigan collection, NESFA has done Cordwainer Smith, and Arkham House has done Nancy Kress's second collection. (Kress's first, *Trinity and Other Stories*, was from Bluejay Books, a smaller publisher who, alas, went under—perhaps validating the major publishers' concerns.)

And now Arkham House has come out with *The Breath of Suspension*, a collection of ten stories by Alexander Jablovsk. All the stories have previously appeared in *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, but if anyone without their own collection of magazines has ever tried to find a six-year-old issue of a science fiction magazine they will understand why I describe such stories as unavailable.

The jacket blurb makes comparisons between Jablovsk's work and the stories of the "Golden Age," but this is deceptive. Some of the concepts may have also been used in the Golden Age, but the execution is far distant from the straightforward Campbellian prose that the term "Golden Age" evokes for me. Jablovsk is far more of a stylist, a far more sophisticated author in some sense, than those earlier writers were. (Many of those earlier writers are still writing now, and they are also often more sophisticated than they were then.)

"The Breath of Suspension," for example, is somewhat reminiscent of *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, but told in a non-linear fashion requiring more attention from the reader.

Several other stories also jump around in time. "Many Mansions" has parallels to Poul Anderson's "Time Patrol" series, but also deals with the marketing of religion. "The Ring of Memory" is almost a cross between a "Time Patrol" story and a "Twilight Zone" episode, with the scope of the former and the personal touch of the latter.

"A Deeper Sea," with its intelligent cetaceans, was probably expanded into Jablovsk's novel of the same name, but stands perfectly well on its own here, and again has the non-linear narrative that Jablovsk seems to like.

Some stories, of course, flow from start to fin-

ish in the normal chain of events.

"Deathbinder" is a horror story of the sort that the "Twilight Zone" might have done, but not quite in this way.

"Above Ancient Seas" is about colonizing other worlds and seems to draw from Ray Bradbury's "Mars" stories.

"Living Will" deals in part with the question of computer storage of personalities; "The Death Artist" is about memory and memories.

"At the Cross-Time Jaunters' Ball" is a parallel worlds story; "Beneath the Shadow of Her Smile" is definitely alternate history, but the alternate history aspect is secondary to Jablovsk's examination of war and what drives us to it.

Arkham House, like many other small-press publishers, takes pride in the book as object as well as a conveyor of text. So the collection is illustrated by J. K. Potter, who uses a photo-montage technique to achieve striking, and often disturbing, effects. And the books feel like something physically well-made. (I admit this may be even more subjective than my opinions of the stories.)

Do I recommend this book? I tend to shy away from recommending hardcover books, since rare is the science fiction reader who isn't working with a budget. But most libraries won't get this (mine will, because apparently the acquisitions person loves science fiction—she also buys Zeising books), and the chance of it being reprinted in paperback are slim indeed. If you've liked Jablovsk's novels (*Carve the Sky*, *A Deeper Sea*, and *Nimbus*) and haven't had a chance to read these stories before, or want to read them again (the stories bear reading more than once, one measure of quality writing), then this book is worth the price.

(If your bookstore doesn't carry this and can't order it, you can order it directly from Arkham House Publishers, P. O. Box 546, Sauk City WI 53583.)

**Agar**

by Steven Brust

Tor, ISBN 0-812-51521-8, 1994, 254pp,  
US\$4.99.

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I greatly enjoyed Steven Brust's *To Reign in Hell*, and have heard good things about his other books. But I have been unwilling to jump into the middle of the Vlad Taltos novels or other associated books, and *Cowboy Feng's Space Bar and Grille*

seemed probably atypical of his writing style. (Of course, that might also have been true of *To Reign in Hell*.) So I was pleased to see that at least there was a non-Talbot Brust book available.

John Agyar is new in town, and leading a somewhat peculiar life. He lives in a haunted mansion, where he converses in a quite normal fashion with the ghost of the ex-slave Jim. (This isn't Hannibal, Missouri; I doubt there is an intentional reference here.) He is seeing two women, Jill Quarrier and her roommate Susan Pfahl. And he's being pursued by a third woman, Laura Kellen whose intentions are not exactly friendly.

Brust manages a style that is modern enough for the setting, yet poetic enough for the feelings and the mystery and the strangeness of what is happening. He keeps the reader slightly off-balance, delivering a surprise here, a twist there, but never enough to overthrow what has come before. This is a book that slowly unfolds and opens itself, like the roses on the cover. (And my the way, the cover by Jim Burns is an excellent rendering of a painting described in the book itself (pages 219 to 220), and no fair skipping ahead to it!). Agyar, and the town of Lakota, and what happens there all form something you won't soon forget. I recommend *Agyar* and I may even brave the Dragaeran series if this is indicative of Brust's writing.

## The Child Garden

by Geoff Ryman

Tor Orb, ISBN 0-312-89023-0, May 1994  
(1989c), 388pp, US\$13.95.  
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Tor's Orb line is bringing back into print (in trade paperback) science fiction works that Tor's editors feel should get a wider audience in the United States than they have gotten so far. These may be books that had only a hardback release, or a paperback release that has long since gone out of print. For example, Ryman's *Child Garden*, was published in Great Britain in 1989 and in hardback in 1990 by St. Martin's in the United States, but never got a paperback release. Maybe publishers didn't think a book about Dante and Derrida would be a runaway best-seller.

The premise is certainly classic science fiction; in the future viruses and other biologicals have been developed for everything. They are used for teaching, they allow people to photosynthesize, they are used for social conditioning, and they have cured

cancer. The last turns out to be a mixed blessing—the same process that caused cancer was also what allowed the body tissues to regenerate. The result is that there is no cancer but no one lives past the age of 35.

Into this world is born Milena. Milena is resistant to the viruses. In the "Child Garden," where she is raised, she has to learn the old-fashioned way, from books. She can't photosynthesize, so she has to get nutrition from food. She isn't socially conditioned, meaning that among other things she hasn't been "cured" of her lesbian orientation. And she has one other difference—she can be creative. While everyone else is directed by their viruses, she is directed by her own nature. So she falls in love with a woman genetically engineered to resemble a polar bear (so she can work in the Antarctic) who has set all of Dante's *Divine Comedy* to music. (It is at this point, perhaps, that *The Child Garden* leaves the realm of easily marketable science fiction.) Since the most popular artform of Milena's time is the perfect reproduction of historical artforms (*Love's Labour Lost* produced identically to the first production and so on), trying to get a new opera of *The Divine Comedy* produced is not the easiest trick in the world. One wonders, in fact, if Ryman isn't being a bit self-referential here. Think about it.

*The Child Garden* is about bioengineering and art and love and a lot more. It's not for everyone, but I recommend it for anyone looking for a literate and thought-provoking novel.

## Interface

by Stephen Bury

Bantam Spectra, ISBN 0-553-37230-0, 1994,  
592pp, US\$12.95.  
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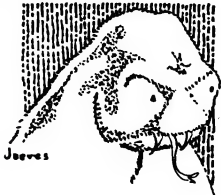
Stephen Bury is a pen name for the writing team of Neal Stephenson (*Snow Crash*) and J. Frederick George. (Someone on the Net claimed that George is Stephenson's father; I have no further evidence of that.) And *Interface* is a high-tech political thriller about a politician who suffers a stroke and undergoes a radically new treatment—with some startling side effects.

In many ways this was reminiscent of Stephen King's *Dead Zone*—there's a political campaign, complete with fascists, seedy politicians, and schemes and plots galore. There are some everyday sorts of characters who find themselves caught up

in the sweep of events. The plot device may be different (though both deal with extraordinary mental powers), but a lot of what surrounds it is the same. It's true that Bury uses his humor slightly differently from King. King uses a slapstick approach, while Bury has a more intellectual tack: "Brain cells didn't grow. But the connections between them did." The network of linkages was constantly shifting and reconnecting itself in a process that was usually described as "learning." Dr. Radhakrishnan did not really care for this terminology because it contained a value judgment. It implied that every time new synapses were formed inside a person's head it was because they were memorizing Shakespeare or being taught how to integrate transcendental functions. Of course, in reality most of the internal rewiring that went on in people's brains took place in response to watching game shows on television, being beaten up by family members, figuring out the cheapest place to buy cigarettes, and being conditioned not to mix plaids with stripes."

Unfortunately, the careful plotting slips up in a couple of spots. On page 10 it is established that Clinton is no longer President, yet on page 356 a televised debate is running the theme of "Campaign '96." (Yes, there could have been an impeachment, but the story seems to rule this out.) Later, someone seems to think a Presidential term runs eight years. And would a whiz-bang political campaign manager really hire someone from *Star Trek: The Next Generation* as someone he was trying to pass off as a news anchorman?

If the science-fictional device is not entirely convincing, well, I'm willing to suspend my disbelief given that most of the rest of the story is believable. The book moves along briskly (I read it in five hours of plane flights) and keeps the reader's interest. But it's more a political thriller than hard science fiction. Readers who enjoyed *Snow Crash* may also miss the philosophical underpinnings that were present in that earlier work. Of course, this may be one reason why Stephenson's name does not appear on this volume.



## Worldwar: In the Balance

by Harry Turtledove

Del Rey, ISBN 0-345-38241-2, January

1994, 488pp, US\$21.

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First, a warning: this is the first book of a four-book series. (According to what I've heard, the other three are *Worldwar: Tilting the Balance* [already in Del Rey's hands], *Worldwar: Upsetting the Balance* [just finished], and *Worldwar: Finding the Balance* [still to be written].) Nowhere on the cover (or inside) does Del Rey warn you of this, and unlike some first novels which can be read as stand-alone stories, this ends on a very open-ended note, with little if anything resolved. Shame on Del Rey for not warning the reader! (Oh, and the cover art by Bob Eggleton has been flip-flopped. One assumes this is for some arcane marketing reason, but the result is that all the swastikas are backwards.)

It is May 1942. War is raging around the world. Major Heinrich Jager is fighting for the Third Reich on the Eastern Front. George Bagnall is a flight engineer for the RAF. Ludmila Gorbunova is a pilot, but for the Soviet Air Force. Moishe Russie is a Jew in the Warsaw Ghetto. Liu Han is a Chinese peasant woman. Jens Larsen is an American physicist on the Manhattan Project. Sam Yeager is a minor league outfielder and science fiction fan from Nebraska. Atvar is the fleetlord of the invading spaceships of the Race.

Say what?

Oh, didn't I mention it? It seems that in this alternate universe, lizardlike aliens from outer space invade Earth in 1942. Needless to say, this changes the progress of World War II considerably. Alliances shift in interesting ways as humans attempt to repel the invaders. This often involves uneasy truces and alliances, as countries unite with their erstwhile (human) enemies to fight the invaders while trying to avoid conceding any advantage to these (human) enemies that might backfire if and when the Race is defeated.

One thing that Turtledove has managed to do is take plot devices and writing techniques that often fail, and make them work. For example, the book starts with a bit of a cliché: the Race surveyed Earth eight hundred years ago and is amazed at the amount of progress made since then, since they show change or progress only over periods of millennia rather than years (for example, between

steam engines and powered flight, or between dynamite and atomic bombs). But there is further explanation and elaboration of this as the story progresses and as the history, biology, and psychology of the Race is revealed, the result is that there are reasons given for this "slowness" on the part of the Race. That's the flip-side of an alternate history, I suppose. An alternate history asks, "What would have happened if Y had happened instead of X?" Here Turtledove asked, "What would have had to have been different for X to happen instead of Y?" It's the difference between induction and retrodiction (as described by Charles Peirce). Detectives use retrodiction (also known as abduction) to figure out what could have led to a certain result; Sherlock Holmes was famous for it. It is seen in science fiction, but more common is the inductive aspect: build a world, then decide what would populate it. (There's also some rather obvious foreshadowing when the Race complain of the cold in Poland—in the middle of the summer.)

The characters on the whole are well fleshed out, though with as many major characters as *Worldwar: In the Balance* has, it's not too surprising that a couple of them are still thinly sketched (undoubtedly some of these will be further devel-

oped in the remaining volumes). The multiple points of view do give a very good "global" feel to this book that many alien invasion stories lacked—how often is everything told through American eyes, with only passing reference to the rest of the world? Here the parts of the world not portrayed are those which are not on a war footing when the Race arrived, and so have less ability to resist the Race. (The end papers contain a list of all the major characters—and some minor ones—with indications as to which are real and which are fictional creations. I would have hoped the latter clarification wasn't necessary, but after someone asked Connie Willis whether the General Grant character in her *Lincoln's Dreams* was real or fictional, one never knows. And admittedly some of Turtledove's "real" characters are less famous than others. At any rate, I hope Del Rey continues this for the rest of the series—in a story published over a period of years, some memory joggers are helpful.)

Turtledove knows how to write a plot and characters that keep the reader interested and turning the pages. Whether he can sustain this for two thousand pages remains to be seen, but this book is at least a good start. [★]

## Film, Book, and Tape Reviews by Mark R. Leeper

### Household Saints

A film review by Mark R. Leeper  
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**Capsule review:** *This tale of Magical Realism in post-WWII Little Italy tells the story of how a modern saint came to be born and how she lived. The plot could have been saccharine, but tales of neighborhood life and different people's reactions to Teresa actually make this film a very watchable fantasy. Rating: +2 (-4 to +4)*

If a miracle happened today, would we believe it? Would we explain it away? How would people react? That is the theme of Nancy Savoca's *Household Saints*. The story is about two generations of a family. It takes place over 21 years or so. To aid in the suspension of disbelief, the story is told in flashback as a neighborhood legend by an old Italian couple. The inner story starts around 1949, taking place in New York's Little Italy. Joseph Santan-

gelo (played by Vincent D'Onofrio) wins Catherine Falconetti (Tracey Ullman) in a game of pinocle. But winning turns out to be one thing and collecting something else. It seems unlikely that these people would be married this way, but it seems that the hand of some sort of fate is pushing them onward. The story dwells on their problems of home life: Joseph's superstitious mother (Judith Malina) hates her daughter-in-law; Catherine's brother is bewitched and obsessed by Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* and devotes his life to getting a wife who is Japanese or Chinese (a distinction of which he is unaware). Yet all of this seems directed toward getting Teresa Santangelo born and forming her saintly character. As a young girl (Rachael Bella; the older Teresa is played by homely but angelic Lili Taylor), she sees John Brahm's *The Miracle of Our Lady of Fatima* and decides to devote her life to being like the saint in that film. *Household Saints* follows the first eighteen years of the life of the woman who may or may not be a saint.

This is a slow and atmospheric film that takes a long time to develop its story, but getting to the

main story is as interesting as being there. There are details of life in Little Italy, told with a sort of magical realism. In humorous contrast to films that focus on the details of sumptuous meals, here we see the meal that an inexperienced Catherine makes under protest. In spite of the best intentions, inexperience dominates and for once an Italian meal on screen looks less than totally appetizing.

Perhaps central to the story is the examination of three kinds of faith, represented by three generations of Santangelo women. For Teresa's grandmother, faith seems entwined with the dark superstitions of the old country. Catherine finds faith later in life, frightened into it by her mother-in-law, and her faith is thin. Teresa's faith is innocent and pure; it is spurred by mystical visions, perhaps neurosis induced by her upbringing, or perhaps genuine miraculous events. Each woman responds to life differently (each somewhat strangely) based on her own brand of faith.

While I am personally skeptical about the existence of true saints, I found that if I went with the flow and thought of this as a fantasy film, there was more than enough to keep me interested here both as an exploration of a religious viewpoint and as a window onto the community in Little Italy. My rating would be a +2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

## Clear and Present Danger

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

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**Capsule review:** *This is the best spy film to be released in several years. It is also the most intelligent film in the Jack Ryan series based on the Tom Clancy novels so far. Screen credit goes to three top-notch screenwriters. There is one breathtaking action sequence, a generous dollop of government skullduggery, and a plot that will seem to be taken from headlines of recent U.S. history. This is as good as any of the James Bond films. Rating: high +2 (-4 to +4).*

When the U.S. Coast Guard intercepts a derelict yacht floating in American waters, it discovers that it was the scene of a grisly set of murders. The victim was a prominent businessman and his family, all personal friends of U.S. President Bennett (Donald Moffat). Bennett is shocked and angry, particularly when investigation proves the murdered man had financial ties to Columbian drug lords. Bennett hints to his security advisors that the time

has come to start striking back against the Columbian drug families. And the action taken and its results are the heart of this story.

Harrison Ford returns as Jack Ryan, and he remains a disappointing choice. Ryan is someone who should be alert, perhaps hyper-active, and should have a youthful appearance to live up to his boy scout image. Even with his character under fire, Ford seems only 90% awake. He is popular with audiences, but his acting is a liability, in my opinion. Donald Moffat returns to playing a President not unlike his Lyndon Johnson of *The Right Stuff*. Adding no new tricks to his bag, Harris Yulin, familiar for many roles as villains, plays National Security Advisor James Cutter. Willem Dafoe does not stretch his talents much as a commando. Anne Archer repeats her role as Cathy Ryan. Miguel Sandoval is a rather winning rich drug lord. It is probably Moffat and Sandoval who stand out as the better actors of the film. But the emphasis is more on the story than on acting.

Phillip Noyce, the director of the (recommended) thriller *Dead Calm*, and the less satisfying *Patriot Games* does have a better script to work from in *Clear and Present Danger*. Generally a script credited to three people will have some problems, but *Clear and Present Danger* seems to suffer from this less than most such films. That could be because of who the three people are. One is John Milius who wrote films like *Magnum Force*, *Apocalypse Now*, *Conan the Barbarian*, and general action films. Then there is Donald Stewart, veteran of *Missing* and the two previous Jack Ryan films. The third writer was Steven Zaillian, whose screen credits include *Awakenings*, *Patriot Games*, *Searching for Bobby Fischer*, and *Schindler's List*. It is an unlikely trio, but it works in a script that has action and is cerebral. Somebody at Paramount was concerned about getting good writing and the screenwriting credits are as impressive as any of the other credits.

The script is good, but not perfect. Toward the end of the film the action starts becoming a little less intelligent and a little more action-oriented. In short, it becomes a little too reminiscent of James Bond films. Though an action sequence in the first third is very well done (if one ignores a touch of clichéd slow motion). This one piece is the high point of the film and really leaves the audience breathless. After Ryan escapes from this trap, there is little else he does that is as impressive. A sequence intercutting between a formal ceremony and a bloody massacre perhaps borrows a little heavily from the "Godfather" films. Also refreshing in the

writing is the presence of a strong and intelligent woman who is clearly not present for decorative value. But what is most impressive in this film is the moral ambiguity of Ryan's position. Ryan remains the hero to the audience, but for the first time in the series, a serious case could be made that he is not acting in the best interests of the United States.

Of course the classic spy film series to date has been the James Bond series. What I think is often forgotten is that the Bond films all too often had contrived and simplistic plots. They were better than this year's *True Lies* in that regard, but there was little to engage the viewer's mind. The plots were too dependent on chase sequences and fight scenes. The other extreme is a story like *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* in which everything that goes on is cerebral. The Jack Ryan films are a happy medium between the two and none more so than *Clear and Present Danger*.

There are more reasons to prefer Ryan to Bond for spy films. The Bond films spend a lot of time on sexual subplots. It is fun, but it takes valuable time from the plot. It is always clear that Ryan's best working organ is between his ears. Clancy's Ryan is a happily married family man who doesn't fool around ... in any sense of the word. With that screen time out of the way, the writing has more room for intelligence (no pun intended). And unlike in Bond films which have long chase scenes, one never feels that it is action scenes alone driving the plot. The action pieces are there, but they serve the plot rather than the reverse. I think I can safely say that *Clear and Present Danger* not only has a more satisfying plot than any of the Bond films, it is even the best of the Ryan films. The basic idea of the last two films could really be told with some justice in one or two sentences each. That is most definitely not the case in *Clear and Present Danger*. The game keeps changing for Jack Ryan through the entire film. Rather than this being a two-sided game, there is the kind of chaos one gets with several sides pulling in different directions. The script makes clever use of recent U.S. history to tell parts

of the story that there would not be time to tell explicitly in the film. *Clear and Present Danger* is the best spy films in several years. It also is as riveting as any Bond film ever made. I would give *Clear and Present Danger* a high +2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

## Core

by Paul Preuss

AvoNova, ISBN 0-380-71182-6,  
August 1994, 394pp, US\$5.99.

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It seems like along time since I had seen a hard science book that is about—predominantly about—geology. Paul Preuss's *Core* looks from the blurbs to be an updating of *Journey to the Center of the Earth* with an expedition to the fiery bowels of the earth. In fact the exact words are "a reborn dream of an incredible expedition to the center of the Earth. In fact, that is misleading. It is really about digging a core hole deep into the Earth. (Preuss obviously runs the risk of having his book reviewed with the phrase "one long bore." This project can only be completed with the author inventing a substance strong enough to withstand the pressures of the dig, Huddelite, named for Cyrus Hudder, the father of Leiden Hudder, the main character.

The use of geology rather than physics or biology as a science to build the story around and the introduction of new super-materials like "Huddelite" give the novel a marvelous pulpish feel that somewhat compensates for not being taken on a journey into the core.

What is not as well handled is the basic mystery of the father and son relationship. It seems that Cyrus Hudder committed suicide under mysterious circumstances and Leiden is as interested in finding out what happened to Pop as he is in digging into the Earth. The story keeps jumping around in time, telling the history of both Leiden and Cyrus. The story is also artificially tied into current event to add excitement that the author apparently assumes would be missing from the scientific part of the story. There is mystery here, but nothing greatly unpredictable. One suspects that Preuss thinks that modern audiences are less interested in scientific discovery than in pyrotechnics.

Another problem I had with the book was its setting of event in 1985 that clearly did not happen then. In specific there is a lethal solar flare. The copyright date is 1993 with a first printing in this





edition in August, 1994. (Odd, as of this writing it is still only July.) I suppose it is fashionable these days to write alternate histories, but you would think the author would have more alternation than that. In spite of that one small problem *Core* is a lot more like novels written in the 60s than the 90s, which as far as I am concerned is not a bad thing.

Preuss seems to have done his homework and along with the basic story the reader does get a small education in geology. He also has given some thought as to the corollary application of a big whole in the ground. The cover quotes "New York *Newsday*" as saying that the book has believable characters. Personally I found them to be just a bit pulpish, but recognize that I probably am willing to sacrifice my demands for characters if I am entertained, learn something, and have an imaginative science plot. To that end I would say that *Core*, with its faults (no pun intended) is still one of the more enjoyable books I have read in a while.

## Cronos

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**Capsule review:** *This is genuinely a cutting-edge art house monster movie. It is visually striking, has a real "what-happens-next?" plot, and some intriguing human relationships. It has been a long time since a new monster movie has played to art film audiences, but this one is worth it. Rating: high +2*

Sometime I say "don't trust me on this one because it is not my kind of film. On this one I say don't trust me because it is my kind of film. From an early age I have loved the horror film. But I have to say that the horror film rarely likes me. Too often the horror film just feeds off films made earlier. It has sequels that are really remakes and even films in which each ten minutes is a remake of the last ten minutes. The sort of thing you see is "Another teenager is fooling around for nine minutes, then Jason attacks and kills him." What changes from film to film is the prosthetic makeup, the special effects, and very little else. The feeling I most prize in a horror film is not chills but curiosity. There are far too few films that make me wonder what the heck is going to happen next. Horror films that do that include *Carnival of Souls*, *Lifeorce*, *The Devil Rides Out*, *To the Devil a Daughter*, *Cronos*, and not nearly enough other horror films. What makes *Cronos* a particular surprise is that it comes from Mexico, a country whose horror films have so often lacked style and originality. Occasionally there will be an atmospheric scene in a Mexican vampire film,

but by and large there has not been a whole lot to interest foreign markets. Now Guillermo Del Toro has made what may have been for me the most enjoyable and creative horror film of the 90s.

In 1536 an alchemist fleeing the Inquisition came to Mexico where he continued his work on immortality until his death in the 1930s. The authorities were shocked by what they found in his rooms, sold off his belongings, and considered the matter closed. In 1996, an antiques dealer, Jesus Gris (played by Federico Luppi) finds a strange antique clockwork mechanism hidden in the base of a statue. It looks like a very large pocket watch, the size of a bar of soap, crossed with a mechanical scorpion. Wind it up and it sprouts legs and stings the hand that is holding it. It is a nasty trick, but that is just the beginning. Roughly speaking I will say that it does fall into an overly-familiar horror genre, but it presses buttons that genre rarely approaches.

This is a film of stylish images and delightful subtle humor. Little visual images like the monster walking the streets of Mexico in what looks like a tuxedo worn back to front (don't worry, in context it makes perfect sense) spice the film and make it a pure pleasure to watch. Del Toro, who both wrote and directed, has an impressive visual sense without ever letting the special effects or the makeup take over the film. Also to be treasured are the few looks we get inside the *Cronos* Device itself.

Del Toro is a well-known film fan in Latin America having grown up on United States and British horror films, *Outer Limits*, and *Twilight Zone*. He wrote the definitive Latin American study of the works of Alfred Hitchcock (which he calls a 540-page love letter to Hitchcock made public). Now he is making his own horror films to compete in Mexico with those made in the United States and if this first film is any indication he is exceeding his goal. Sr. Del Toro, please continue to make original films like this one.

*Cronos* is one of the most enjoyable horror films I have seen since I was a teen, I would rate it a high +2.

## Doomsday Gun

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**Capsule review:** *Once again HBO's docudramas prove that there are good films being made for cable. The story of Gerald Bull and his attempts to build a super-gun for Saddam Hussein's pre-war Iraq was under-reported in the press, in spite of the natural fascination of the material.*



*This film is a sort of Tucker-meets-Tom-Clancy based on fact. Rating: +2*

I think I have a special fondness for HBO docudramas. They generally have a good feel for how to make recent history engrossing and dramatic. Whether they choose to base it on pre-existing material, as they did in last year's adaptation of Randy Shilts' *And the Band Played On*, or whether they write their own story based on research as they did with *Dead Ahead*, their quality is generally more than a rival for what is playing in the theaters.

With *Dead Ahead* they had their work cut out for them. This was the story of the Exxon Valdez disaster and the politics of what followed.

It is not easy to make that material really engrossing, and they managed. *Doomsday Gun* suffers from no such handicap. The story of Gerald Bull and his super-gun already has the makings to be Tucker-meets-Tom-Clancy. Add to that the fact that the story was really was under-reported in the press and you have a fairly engrossing piece of entertainment.

Frank Langella plays Gerald Bull, a child-man with a fascination with large artillery pieces and the engineering intellect to build the guns that he dreams about. His inspiration since boyhood has been Jules Verne's *From the Earth to the Moon* with its cannon large enough to send a shell and its passengers to the moon. The Canadian has built guns for the United States and many of its allies, including Israel, whom he helped to defend the Golan Heights. After a falling out with the Americans he decides that he will sell his services and that of his small organization to the highest bidder ("except the Russians"). The highest bidder turns out to be Saddam Hussein who is militarizing and fortifying Iraq. Alan Arkin plays an Israeli intelligence officer with the uncomfortable job of convincing a friend and former ally not to build his gun and place it in the hands of Hussein. Meanwhile Bull has to get the industrialized nations to build the parts he needs under the noses of their own intelligence agencies. Then there is the larger story of how much governments' intelligence agencies knew and even had complicity in the arming of Iraq.

If you go into *Doomsday Gun* expecting *Clear and Present Danger*, you are sure to be disappointed. But if you are expecting a modest little made-for-cable film, you will probably be very pleasantly surprised. *Doomsday Gun* ranks very well with what is in release in theaters. If you consider all the boxing matches and stand-up comics *ad nauseum* that made-for-cable fare is becoming on the "pre-

mium" services, *Doomsday Gun* at least shows that some quality material is still being made. I would give *Doomsday Gun* a +2.

## The Enemy Within

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**Capsule review:** An HBO remake of *Seven Days in May* done quick, dirty, and with very few surprises. The best that can be said for this version is that it will do little to impair the enjoyment of the original. Rating: low 0 (-4 to +4)

At first it seemed promising. The ad for *The Enemy Within* ran right after another made-for-HBO movie, *The Doomsday Gun* which was actually a very enjoyable film. The ad implied the story was about a coup in the United States. Now the classic political suspense film is *Seven Days in May*, a superb film with a great script and a powerhouse cast including Kirk Douglas, Burt Lancaster, Frederic March, Martin Balsam, Edmond O'Brien, not to mention enough other good actors to stock two more films. (Let me amend that: there are only two really great American political thrillers—both directed by John Frankenheimer: *Seven Days in May* and *The Manchurian Candidate*. No other political thrillers come close.) But another suspense film in the vein of *Seven Days in May* could be exciting... as long as it was sufficiently original. *The Enemy Within* turns out to be too much like its illustrious predecessor and yet not nearly enough; it is based on the Rod Serling script for *Seven Days in May*, adapted from the Fletcher Knebel and Charles W. Bailey II novel. That means they took some assets of that film, but at a very high price. They invite constant comparison and they could not deliver a film that came anywhere close to stacking up.

The plot is of an admirer of and aide to a great general in the mode of MacArthur who is troubled by that general becoming a demagogue. Suddenly the aide discovers his hero may be leading a well-orchestrated conspiracy to take over the government. He has one week to prevent the coup, if he decides that is where his loyalties lie.

Forrest Whitaker is by now a familiar face to filmgoers from films like *Good Morning, Vietnam*; *Bird*; *The Crying Game*; and the under-recognized *Diary of a Hitman*, but he is wrong for this role of "Jiggs" (now "Mac") Casey. Too few roles go to portly actors, but the highly visible colonel, the aide to one of the most powerful men in the country, would be unlikely to be a man of such heavy sta-

ture. It is an exercise in futility to expect that Whitaker and Jason Robards Jr. could carry a film like Kirk Douglas and Burt Lancaster in their prime. Even some of the best lines from the Serling script fall flat when say in this film because the original script took the time to build up to them properly.

Sam Waterston is only mediocre as the President; somehow he just fails to capture the dignity of his office. He does not seem sufficiently Presidential. In the previous version there is a whole Presidential staff going in different directions trying to untie the Gordian knot of the coup plot. Their parts are reduced to a single Presidential secretary who, of course, has a film-star beauty that does not seem likely for an Oval Office position.

The technique used to adapt the story was to scope it down so that it was less difficult and expensive to film, then to pad the plot to fill the gaps. Instead of having important and tense sequences in Spain and Texas, the film is set entirely in Washington. With the extra time we get an irrelevant subplot of "Mac" Casey's problems raising his son. There is more than enough material in the original script to fill a film twice the length of *The Enemy Within* and this piece is a most unwelcome diversion. Also we get gunplay and murder where the original got by with one off-screen apparent murder and no other violence. The action in the original was cerebral, not visceral. We get several chases where the original had only one very short chase. And, of course, the film has the requisite computer break-ins. About the only addition to the plot of any real political interest value is a part played by George Dzundza as a third party with a definite interest in the proceedings.

Perhaps this might have appeared a better film if I had never seen the original. That is impossible to judge. But this movie definitely demonstrates that it is foolish to remake a film just because the original was good. You have to have something new and of value you can do to improve on the original. And in that regard *The Enemy Within* was doomed from the beginning. Unless you have an allergy to black and white films—and more fool you—go back and watch the John Frankenheimer original. I give this film a low 0.

## Julien Duvivier's *The Golem* (1936)

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To start with, what is a golem? It is a statue that has been brought to life by mystical means. The Bi-

ble claims that God created man by bringing the dust of the earth together and breathing life into it. Legend has it that God can be invoked to do it again by special Ceremonies, though the formula is imperfect and the resulting artificial human will lack the power of speech. *Frankenstein* was inspired by golem legends. The most famous golem story is of the Golem of Prague, brought to life to protect the Jewish community. Films about golems are unusual though there had been two made in Germany previously starring Paul Wegener. One of them is a lost film, but the other is considered a classic. Since that film was made a tide of anti-Semitism had risen in Germany. In 1935 the Nuremberg Laws institutionalizing German state anti-Semitism. About the same time a film, a French and Czech co-production, was being made with veiled anti-German and not so veiled pro-Jewish sentiments, *The Golem*. The film has interest as a political document as well as a fantasy film. For many years this has been a rare film, but this year it is starting to become available on videotape.

The time is the 17th Century in Prague. Rabbi Loew, who created the Golem is dead, but Rudolf II is still emperor. The troubled Jewish community is now led by the young Rabbi Jacob, student and friend of the late Rabbi Loew. Rudolf's tolerance of the Jewish community has lasted about as long as the life of Loew. Now he is reinstituting persecution albeit warily. His dreams are still troubled with visitations of the Golem and he will not rest easy until he possesses it and is sure the Jews cannot reanimate it. He is willing to torture and kill to get his hands on the magical statue. All his attempts to confiscate it fail until one night it just appears in his palace, still stone-like and inanimate. With the Golem under his thumb, the Rudolf safely returns to persecution.

Except for the metaphor of its politics, and perhaps not even that at the time, this is not a film of extreme subtlety. The filmmakers were primarily interested in getting their idea across. The feeding of Jews to lions is probably anachronistic, but it is an image that the audiences could probably find meaningful. The writers obviously felt very strongly about the film's message and was neither shy nor particularly subtle about expressing that message. When somebody tries to warn the Jews "Your brothers are in the hands of murderers" it is clear that the message is meant for more than the characters in the film. When the Emperor calls himself a friend of Jews while torturing one the analogy may break down slightly—at least the Nazis admitted their motives toward the Jews—but still it is clear

that it is another dig at the Third Reich. The burning of the Jewish ghetto also seems to be a very contemporary image in the film. The motto of the film, often repeated, is "revolt is the right of a slave." The French filmmakers do not say the French will come to the Jews' aid if they revolt, but it definitely affirms their right.

Julien Duvivier directed the film as a somewhat fancy costume drama, perhaps to attract a wider audience in the bleak days of the late thirties in Europe. In a golem film, of course one of the main considerations is the design of the Golem itself. Ferdinand Hart is perhaps one of the least imaginative visualizations. It looks more or less like a statue of a large bald man. The reasons for toning down the horrific aspect of the Golem are again likely to be political. If the film is supposed to instill a sense of solidarity with the Jews, it would not make sense to have them be the creators of monsters. The script then seems intentionally to build suspense about the appearance of the Golem. He is not shown on-screen until well into the plot and only at the end of a suspenseful sequence of a nighttime walk through the big empty palace. Disorientation and insecurity on the part of the emperor are often created with a tilted camera.

Harry Baur as the emperor is goggle-eyed and insecure. He was at the time a familiar actor, I believe. Charles Dorat as Rabbi Jacob is young and handsome but his performance is not particularly inspired. Finally there is Ferdinand Hart in the title role as the mystical statue. What can you say about a role that for most of the film requires you to stand absolutely still, then in the inevitable climax for this sort of film suddenly in the final reel turns into Machiste. The role requires more broad shoulders than depth.

I would say that the film is less a work of art and more a piece with some entertainment and an artifact of a dramatic period of history. Nevertheless, as someone with a particular interest in golem legends I am very pleased to see this particular film, usually only available at campus showings, now on videotape.

## *The House of the Spirits*

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**Capsule review:** *This is a film with large virtues and large problems. Many fine actors are present, but more for name value than because they had something special to contribute. But we do get a feel for the sweep of Chile's history this century.*

*Dr. Zhivago it isn't, but it is Zhivagesque. Rating: +1 (-4 to +4). Unfortunately, much of what I would like to say about the film would telegraph unexpected plot twists, so a spoiler section will follow the review.*

Bille August is best known in this country for his films *Pelle the Conqueror* and *The Best Intentions*. This time around he has adapted and directed *The House of the Spirits*, based on Isabel Allende's novel. The film features a powerhouse cast of at least nine international stars, chosen in what often seems to be bizarre casting decisions. The film is an uneasy blend of Magical Realism and hard-edged politics. The story is set in Chile and is about two generations of women in the Trueba family whose lives are troubled in large part by Esteban Trueba (Jeremy Irons) who rules the family. Clara is a young girl with psychic talents which bring her family tragedy. Clara remains mute for twenty years, but is once again willing to talk when courted by the dashing Esteban (who earlier was engaged to her sister). Esteban made his fortune prospecting for gold. Now he wishes to settle down on a big ranch and to run the world around him with a little philandering on the side. The Indians who have worked the land can stay but are treated like serfs. This is the story of Esteban, his wife Clara (Meryl Streep), his sister Ferula (Glenn Close), and his daughter Blanca (Winona Ryder). We follow two generations, their lives and loves and their politics.

Just a look at that cast tells you that a lot of the budget of this film is going into getting major stars. While there are more than enough Hispanic actors who are finding it hard to get work, big names are being cast as Hispanics. As far as I am concerned that is only a minor pity if the people cast are really good in their roles. The sad fact is that the high-priced talent is less and not more effective than more realistic people would have been. Many of the big stars might have been believable if this was the first time we were seeing them but Winona Ryder looks like someone who would be more at home in California than in Chile. Streep and Irons, both very good actors, but they sound like they are respectively from the U.S. and Britain. Glenn Close somehow manages to be as believable in her role as a native Chilean, but even the often under-rated Close does no better than a native would have. This is a German-Danish-Portuguese-U.S. co-production, but that does not mean they could not have gotten an Hispanic cast. *Like Water for Chocolate* is a Mexican film cast with inexpensive Mexican unknowns and every casting choice in that film is as

good or better than the choices in this film.

The film does inherit the sweep of the novel and that helps it overcome some of its problems to get a +1.

**Spoiler:** Some more comments I wanted to make as mild spoilers. The device of having Blanca narrate the film makes it seem more personal, but at the same time it destroys some of the suspense.

Much of the last part of the plot seems contrived. Every good deed that Esteban has committed rewards him in the end and each bad deed ends up costing him more than he expects. However, Ryder says that the diaries helped her understand how events were interconnected so it leaves open the possibility that she is stressing the interconnections.

Bille August has written and directed an adaptation of Isabel Allende's novel, making a film that has strong parallels to Bernardo Bertolucci historical epics *1900* and *The Last Emperor*. The similarities are so great, in fact, that one could almost consider the three films to be a trilogy. Each film starts in the old world and a vanished culture where the main character is a man who has lord-like power and uses it to defend the old order of things. There are signs of change around him but he confuses them with corruption of the old order. Finally the wheel turns and it is the new more liberal forces in power. The character is forced to realize that what he saw as corruption was really the force of reform.

## It Could Happen to You

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**Capsule review:** *Nicolas Cage plays an honest cop who agrees to share a lottery ticket with a waitress, then finds himself sharing four million dollars. This is a light summer love story that also makes some comment on the selfish and unselfish uses of good fortune. Cage and Bridget Fonda make a likable couple. Rating: high +1 (-4 to +4) .in -5*

*It Could Happen to You* is claimed to be based on fact both internally and in the publicity. In actual fact, just about none of it is true, but the basic situation of a policeman sharing a lottery ticket as a tip and then splitting the payoff when the ticket actually wins. Jane Anderson's screenplay takes that situation as a springboard to tell a fable about greed and unselfishness. Surprisingly, the invented story is not all that far from credibility.

Charlie Lang (Nicolas Cage) is a good, honest cop who lives the kind of life that a good honest cop can expect to live. He has a one-bedroom apart-



Image #007 by Cathy Nalrus Copyright 1994

ment, a lot of aggravation, and a dissatisfied wife Muriel (Rosie Perez) who is getting ready to give up on Charlie and look for something new. One day Charlie buys a lottery ticket. Then getting a cup of coffee he finds he does not have money for a tip so promises to split any lottery winnings with his waitress, Yvonne Biasi (Bridget Fonda). When the ticket wins to the tune of four million dollars Charlie's wife Muriel wants Charlie to keep all the money for themselves. Charlie insists repeatedly that a promise is a promise and splits the money with Yvonne.

As Charlie discovers, winning the lottery completely changes who you are and how people relate to you. Charlie and Yvonne find kindred spirits in each other, each wanting to spend much of the money unselfishly. They also begin getting interested in each other. Muriel, on the other hand, wants to enjoy every dollar spending it on herself. What is more, she wants all four million. What results is neither entirely expected or unrealistic. On top of this is a rather pleasant love story in which Cage and Fonda work very well together on the screen.

And Fonda and Cage are something of a surprise as a screen couple. Cage has overcome the goopy kid roles he has played in the past and carries the film reasonably well as a leading man. He has, of course, worked with director Andrew Bergman before in *Honeymoon in Vegas*. Fonda is captivating with a winning smile and a more winning acting talent. Slightly misjudged is Rosie Perez, whose grating voice was somehow an asset when

she played the traumatized plane passenger in *Fearless*, but here, playing a human cockroach, she seems just insufferable on the screen. Also disappointing is the limiting of Stanley Tucci to three scenes as Yvonne's wandering husband. Tucci is a rubber-faced actor who proved he had a great deal of comic potential as Alec Baldwin's best friend in *Prelude to a Kiss*.

Anderson's screenplay has a lot of what was good in older Frank Capra films. Unfortunately Capra films were far from perfect and an unrealistic turn of events toward the end of the film is lifted straight from a Frank Capra film. What is oddly missing is the attention to well-observed character development that one would find in a Capra film. It is odd because Anderson proved she was good at creating characters in *The Positively True Adventures of the Alleged Texas Cheerleader-Murdering Mom* for HBO. Here, instead of developing the minor characters the screenwriter actually seemed to be working with a checklist to make sure a wide variety of ethnic minorities were represented in the film. Also the telling of the story with a narrator seems to be a false move on the part of the author.

*It Could Happen to You* is not a great film, but it is an enjoyable love story and a pleasant change from much gun-blazing summer entertainment available in the theaters right now. I would give it a high +1.

## Jedi Search

by Kevin J. Anderson

Read by Anthony Heald

Bantam, ISBN 0-553-47199-6, audio cassette, 180 min, 1994, US\$16.99.

An audiocassette review by Mark R. Leeper  
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I don't often have much opportunity to review cassette readings of abridgements of novels, though I will frequently take the sting out of work around the house by listening to novels on cassette via Walkman. It certainly isn't my preferred way to read a novel, but it is the just about the most entertaining way I know of doing housework. I usually listen to novels like *The Firm*, but when a review copy of *Jedi Search* showed up in the house, I figured, what the heck.

*Jedi Search* is the first novel of Kevin Anderson's Jedi Academy Trilogy. The series continues the adventures where the film series left off, with a story of Luke Skywalker trying to rekindle the or-

der of Jedi Knights by finding and training new adepts in the Force. What can you say about the plot? It is just about what you would expect from a new "Star Wars" film. Anderson was clearly trying to translate the experience of seeing a new "Star Wars" installment into book—or in this case cassette—form. We have new threats from the nasty Empire with bigger and more powerful weapons. We have the dubious joy of visiting the spice mines of Kessel, mentioned in the first film. Anderson has very consciously tried to tie the events, locations, and even objects of the series' films as if they were Anderson's series all along.

This cassette production is read by Anthony Heald, who will be familiar to some as Hannibal Lecter's obnoxious psychiatrist and keeper from the film *The Silence of the Lambs*. There are a few artificial touches to make an attempt to use the medium to increase the cinematic feel. Chewbacca doesn't speak any language that sounds to us humans as articulate. He just sort of mornfully bellows. They have gotten the sound of one bellow off the sound-track and they play it whenever Chewbacca is supposed to be speaking. I believe that is the only sound effect taken from the films, but it is used profusely. At times the production team over-use it and it becomes obvious that they have only one bellow which they use for all moods and messages. The cassette also uses the original John Williams score to add excitement to many of the scenes. Though they are, of course, limited to music that is already familiar—they hardly were going to hire Williams or anyone else to add to the original three scores. That is sort of the spirit of the whole production. It does as many simple and inexpensive touches it can to recreate the feel of what has gone before without adding too much that is original or new.

This cassette was nothing earth-shaking, but it considerably improved the dreary task of shoveling my driveway. And I'll tell you I had one heck of a lot of empathy for Han Solo's back-breaking labors in the spice mines of Kessel. There is such a thing as going too far to make the listener think he is part of the story.

## Nosferatu the Vampire (1978)

directed by Werner Herzog

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It is difficult to know exactly how to rate this film having seen it subtitled, fifteen years ago in a London theater, and seeing it (1) dubbed, (2) on vi-

deo and (3) a decade and a half later. The two experiences were very different, and I think all three factors played a part. I happen to be one of those rare film buffs who thinks that potentially you can do more with dubbing than subtitling. Generally I see the advantage in overlapping dialog. And admittedly Werner Herzog is a long way from having overlapping dialog in this film but for unaccountable reasons, I think the dubbed version moves at least marginally better.

According to press releases at the time, Herzog explained what he was doing with *Nosferatu the Vampire* was like when one artist does a painting of another artist's painting. He is trying to capture the same brush-strokes but at the same time bring some of his own art to the story. This was not a satire and not entirely a remake of Murnau's famous version either. A remake tells an older story with modern conventions. Herzog was trying to use the silent screen acting conventions—conventions that are quite unrealistic, and ones which sound have made unnecessary.

Many scenes are simply redone, others are added, and still others redone with different emphasis. One thing that was changed from Murnau's film was that Herzog went back to the Bram Stoker character names. Most remaining prints of the original seem to use the Stoker names also, though for its early releases the vampire's name was Count Orlok, Jonathan Harker was Waldemar Hutter, etc. to hide the origins of the story. It was a simple matter to use the Stoker names later, since it meant only changing a few title cards. That had to be done anyway for non-German releases. Perhaps for commercial reasons, Herzog uses the character names—particularly Dracula—that the audience will recognize. He also continues to use part of the title, but he "explains it" so audiences will know what the film is about. Instead of calling it *Nosferatu, a Symphony of Terrors*, it becomes *Nosferatu the Vampire*. The latter is a ridiculous title since I believe the word means "the undead" and is clearly no vampire's name.

The plot is, if anything, less faithful to the novel than was Murnau's version. Renfield has been removed from the action. We do have a giggling Renfield as Harker's supervisor at the beginning, but he does not appear again in the film. Generally, this is Murnau's much-abbreviated version of the story, concentrating in large part on the visit to Dracula's castle and then condensing down the vast majority of the rest of the novel into another sequence of roughly the same length. The stage play, the version filmed with Lugosi and later with Langella, did



much the same thing. Like the Murnau, this version associates vampirism with the medieval accusation of spreading plague. Herzog also carries on the story, beyond the Murnau ending throwing in and additional plot twist, though definitely not one taken from Stoker.

The acting is best described as "stylized" with some odd touches. Isabel Adjani can be described only as prematurely ghastly even before the presence of vampires in the film. When Count Dracula arrives and she comes under his influence, the change in her performance is minimal. Klaus Kinski is bizarre and slow-moving as Dracula under very heavy makeup. It does not help that he is given lines like "Night is an abyss, profound as a thousand years" when the viewer knows darn well it



isn't. The film is full of silent film exaggeration in the acting, more or less as a tribute to that sort of acting.

Visually the film is much the analog of the earlier version, leaving off a few touches that have not aged well like the undercranked camera to show the speed of the vampire's carriage. The film opens with a study of grotesque Gothic statues that sets the tone for a re-examination of the macabre art of the past, much like what Herzog is doing by re-examining the Murnau.

In his effort to recapture the spirit of the original, the director adopts slow, deliberate pacing. This makes the film dreamlike and almost operatic with some scenes going on seemingly interminably. Wagnerian operatic themes underscore scenes of mountains. These scenes seem out of place today, though in days of the Murnau they presented the viewer with scenes that still had considerable novelty. Other images have aged considerably better and the re-use still has power. The silent ghost-like ship, the Demeter is a mysterious and oddly exciting image. It conjures memories of Wagner's *Flying Dutchman*. Herzog's also has nice visual play with shadow. It is here, with scenes of the ship and in the playing with shadow that the resurrection of Murnau's style has its greatest power.

## The Shadow

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**Capsule review:** *The sumptuous and fun new film version of The Shadow is faithful to the letter of the canon of the old radio hero but adds a lot that is new. What they have changed makes for good storytelling. This is a very enjoyable fantasy film and could well be this summer's Jurassic Park. This one is a lot of fun. Rating: high + 2.*

Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men? Now let's not always see the same hands.

Back in the 30's and 40's, before there was television, one of the great super-heroes of the radio-waves, pulps, and comics was Lamont Cranston. He was a variant on H. G. Wells' *Invisible Man*. Cranston could not actually make himself invisible, but using techniques he learned in the orient he could "cloud men's minds so they cannot see him." With adventures that began in 1931, he was one of the earliest popular American superheroes, and was perhaps the most popular superhero on the radio. The Shadow had already been a household name more than seven years when Superman first appeared and more than eight years when Batman was

first introduced. To the radio's sinister strains of Saint-Saens's "Omphale's Spinning Wheel" the invisible Shadow would stalk the night looking for evil-doers to scare the bejeezus out of. Over the years there were many cast changes and many voices to The Shadow and his sidekick, "the lovely and talented Margo Lane," including at one time respectively, Orson Welles and Agnes Moorehead.

Even though The Shadow lasted on radio twenty years, until 1956, there was never (until now) a memorable version of The Shadow on TV or in the movies. Somehow the combination of atmosphere and special effects necessary would have never been possible. Also unlike other superheroes, The Shadow had to be played by someone ugly. The pulps, which started publishing the character in 1931, always portrayed him as a tall man with a long crooked nose, a fedora, and the lower part of his face covered. He was more frightening when you could see what he looked like. Victor Jory was nearly ugly enough and starred in a 1940 serial, but could not match the phantom with the disembodied voice of vengeance on the radio. Today special effects are much more articulate on the screen, even if actors often are not. The menace of The Shadow is now very possible to show on the screen. In fact, while on the radio The Shadow could only cloud men's minds and in later years read what he clouded, the screen's new Shadow has an arsenal of psychic weapons, and so do his enemies. This provides opportunity for more visual excitement. But what current actor is ugly enough to play Lamont Cranston, The Shadow? Would you believe Alec Baldwin? I would not have, but this film manages to have a handsome Shadow without compromising on the menace or the image.

As far as I know, the radio plays never gave you much of a history of how The Shadow got his peculiar talents. I have been a fan of the radio plays and they never went into any detail on the origins of The Shadow except that in the Orient this hero learned the ability to "cloud men's minds." The film goes into much more detail.

Our story begins in Tibet with Lamont Cranston anything but heroic. As his first alter-ego Ying Ko, he is a mysterious drug lord of American origin. It is hard to believe that this villain will one day be the great crime-fighter I know from the radio series. Seduced by the light side of the force he goes to New York to make amends for the evils he did in the East. He gets one opportunity after a priceless sarcophagus is sent, un-requested, to the New York Museum of Natural History. The coffin leads to murder and The Shadow finds himself fighting



Shiwan Khan, the last descendant of Genghis. Khan is portrayed by John Lone who played *The Last Emperor* and Khan is now determined to become the next one.

*The Shadow* probably does not use Baldwin to the fullest it could since the demands of playing a superhero fall well short of those of being one. It at least gives him a chance to play someone a little sinister and helps to shake off his clean-cut family man image. Perhaps out of place are his humorous one-liners after action scenes. They were funny when James Bond delivered them in the 60s, but they have become much too common in action films and it is all wrong for the somber Shadow to be making "Bondisms." Penelope Ann Miller is attractive in dresses featuring low cuts in front and lower cuts in back. She has a little more to do than the original Margo Lane—the original was little more than a sounding board so the audience knew what The Shadow was thinking—but still this is not a role that stretches someone's acting abilities. One way to tell this film had serious financial backing is the name actors in parts that could have gone to unknowns. Jonathan Winters, in his most reserved role in memory, plays the police commissioner actually fairly well. Peter Boyle has little to do and seems along only for the ride. Andre Gregory is completely wasted as a minor functionary in The Shadow's network. Tim Curry makes a weird villain, but doesn't that go without saying?

But the real star of the film is New York City of the 1930s. Not New York as it was then or ever, but a beautiful, idealized, Art Deco 1930s New York City. Director Russell Mulcahy, who gave us the great-looking *Highlander*, gives us a stunningly idealized Manhattan of the mind's eye. In addition he gives us small gratuitous surprises for the camera including one subjective shot that is almost a roller-coaster ride in itself. And a Jerry Goldsmith score is always a plus.

This may not be exactly the classic radio version of The Shadow, but it may be more fun. For the most part it does not contradict the canon, but it places it in a larger context and fills in many of the blanks. There are some changes but there is a lot of filling in of gaps in some very unexpected ways. Lamont Cranston is given an evil past that certainly casts The Shadow in a whole new light. In fact it adds complexity to his character over the one-dimensional do-gooder. While Batman is essentially out for vengeance against criminals in general, Lamont Cranston had committed terrible evils and was driven by the need to make amends. I am not sure that this is what Walter Gibson had in mind for his

character, but it certainly works.

The Shadow on radio was a little different from The Shadow in the pulp magazines and The Shadow in the film is different from either. I do not remember any radio references to The Shadow having a network of agents—I think there was more about them in the pulps. Even on the radio he did have his faithful cab driver Shrevie. The Asian mysticism that plays a big part in the film version was not usually apparent in the radio series, though some of the pulps drew heavily on the Asian origin of the The Shadow's powers. Perhaps the most interesting revision to the Canon is to give Margo psychic abilities also. While never explained it really adds interest to her relationship with Lamont.

This may well be a piece of summer fluff, but I found it far more engaging than the usual superhero film. For once the power of the mind, both psychic and reasoning, are as important to a hero as are his physical powers. And the image of the tall, crooked-nosed in Fedora and cape whipping out guns will thrill rather than disappoint fans of The Shadow. This is the most I think I have ever enjoyed a "superhero" film. I give it a high +2 on the -4 to +4 scale. (Oh, by the way, my contact with The Shadow has been almost entirely in radio revivals of the old series. I am too young to have heard original broadcasts.)



## Wolf

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**Capsule review:** Jack Nicholson stars in a film that tells a very traditional sort of werewolf story and makes no attempt to redefine the sub-genre in any way. Mike Nichols thankfully has more plot than special effects, but there is not enough here to sink your teeth into. Rating: low +1.

The Frankenstein monster and the vampire each owe their popularity to a single novel that captured the public's imagination. Werewolves are much more a product of the cinema, however. The closest there comes to being a classic werewolf novel that impacted cinema is Guy Endore's *Werewolf of Paris* of 1933. The first well-remembered werewolf film was 1935's *Werewolf of London*. That and *The Wolfman* (1941) really were what captured the pub-

lic's interest in human-animal shape-shifters. Since that time, there have probably been only four films that did anything really interesting with the concept. Those would be (the flawed but original) *Wolfen* (1981), *The Howling* (1981), the under-rated *Cat People* (1982), and *The Company of Wolves* (1984)—odd that they should all be in the space of four years. Most other shape-shifter films followed the same rules with minor variations and said little new about the condition of being a shape-shifter. Generally you find someone bitten by a werewolf, usually someone who is unable to express his rage, who gets an outlet by turning into an animal and letting rage be channeled in brutal ways. Unlike vampires, werewolves usually detest their condition, but they are powerless to control it. The condition easily applies itself to a metaphor for severe mental problems much as vampirism is often a metaphor for drug addiction.

Right down this centerline of interpretation with almost no spin on the ball is *Wolf*. Jack Nicholson plays Will Randall, an editor for a leading publisher who looks for literary merit rather than books that will make a fast buck. When his publishing house is taken over by a corporate magnate, Raymond Alden (played by Christopher Plummer), Randall finds himself being replaced and given the choice of a bad job or none at all. The old Will was a sofie who would have stood by and taken it. However, after being bitten by a wolf on a Vermont back road, Will feels unexplainedly invigorated and ready to put up a fight. What follows is an almost by-the-numbers amalgamation of elements of *Werewolf of London* and *The Wolfman*. This could almost be titled *The Wolfman of Manhattan*.

This is one film that really could have benefited by being done in black and white. Director Mike Nichols occasionally manages an atmospheric scene, but he is no Paul Schrader and Nichols probably would not have had the clout to insist on black and white or highly muted colors even if he wanted to use them. (Perhaps he could have used a werewolf bite himself!) He also makes the irritating mistake of showing Wolfman Will's superhuman leaps in slow motion where they look totally unbelievable. (With Nichols directing, listen for a voice cameo by his wife, Elaine May.)

*Wolf* features sound in THX, the screen's new abbreviation for "too darn loud." The werewolf makeup was the creation the talented Rick Baker, though here the effect is a bit understated. Wolf-Nicholson looks like a Dickensian thug with an underbite. Nichols probably could have chosen more elaborate special effects, but for once a direc-

tor did not feel the need to have elaborate special effects upstaging the actors. However, perhaps better effects were needed for animatronic wolves, which do not look realistic.

Nicholson is a rather obvious choice for a werewolf since he always seems to be barely keeping his animal side in check. Nevertheless, as the book editor with a heart who is always looking out for the interest of his staff, he is less than totally convincing. Michelle Pfeiffer is on hand as an heiress and a woman who runs (around) with the wolves. James Spader, Kate Nelligan, and Christopher Plummer costar, and each gives a reasonable performance.

This is a film that gives all it promises, but little that is new or novel in the werewolf film. I rate it a low +1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

## Mr. Vampire

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I recently have had a much appreciated opportunity to see three horror films from Hong Kong: *Mr. Vampire*, *A Chinese Ghost Story*, and *Chinese Ghost Story II*. They were fun films, somewhat similar to each other in approach. Each was heavy on the comedy aspects. Generally I don't care much for comedy in horror, particularly slapstick. But I am told that Chinese audiences really expect it and it would not be a Chinese horror film without being tongue-in-cheek. While horror does not get in the way of the comedy, in my opinion comedy often damages or destroys the impact of the horror. In each of these films the result is a horror film that works no better (though certainly no worse) than *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein*. While these films have the pacing that a *Kwaidan* lacks, they could afford take themselves a little more seriously like *Kwaidan* does. Perhaps what I would enjoy most is something between the Hong Kong approach and the *Kwaidan* approach. It would be nice if Hong Kong were making films of the style of Hammer Films of Britain, but that just isn't their style and probably not what their audiences want.

*Mr. Vampire*—which would more aptly be called *Mr. Hopping Ghost*—has the novelty of adding a new folklore monster to the horror film, at least new to us Americans. I have, though, read a little about Chinese Hopping Ghosts. The idea is that in most dead the Po—that is the soul—has departed for the next world. But some corpses die with unfinished business, for example if the body has not been buried in the corpse's home town. In such

circumstances the Po will stay in the corpse, which will then not decay. For even more the corpse may get up and walk. And when it walks it will have superhuman strength and will kill any mortals it can get its hands on. Rigor mortis will, however, make the stiff, well ... stiff. It will be too stiff to walk, but will be able to manage a hop. That is why a hopping ghost hops.

So as an American seeing *Mr. Vampire* you have to be part cultural detective as well as being a film fan. But some of the images are as eerie for me as they would be for someone raised with the culture. Some perhaps even more so since they are such alien images. The film opens with a scene of a row of hopping ghosts standing in a monastery, each with a prayer paper seemingly tacked over its face. I suspect it is as weird for me, not knowing what it meant as it would be for someone who did. Perhaps a bit more.

Some of the fun of seeing this film, and it is fun though faint subtitles also make it also hard work, is in trying to figure out the rules that apply to hopping ghosts. If you are being stalked you can make yourself safe as long as you neither move nor breathe. Apparently they home in on their victim's breath. (How long can YOU hold your breath?) They can be stopped by putting some sort of inscription on a piece of paper and attaching it to the hopping ghost's forehead. I don't know what the inscription says since I don't read Chinese, but I think it is a kind of death prayer. They cannot walk on uncooked sticky rice, probably because it absorbs things around it (which is why restaurants will put some rice in with the salt in shakers). They are repelled by inscriptions written with a mixture of Chinese ink and chicken blood. You kill them by burning them coffin and all. So they do have some characteristics in common with cinema vampires but they are not vampiric—they do not seem to suck blood. Instead they strangle and mutilate.

I will say a bit less about *Chinese Ghost Story I and II* since they are a somewhat better known in this country already. In some ways they borrow a lot from the *Evil Dead* films but they have a panache all their own. A sort of ne'er-do-well happens upon a haunted monastery and soon is facing ghosts and Chinese demons. Eventually he is has a guide through this world in the form of a Taoist master who sings an amusing song that is a sort of commercial for Tao. They are sucked into another world where mythical figures battle. It is fast paced with variable special effects but always watchable. Again the worst touch is the poor subtitles, but much of the action transcends the language barrier.

Again, as with *Mr. Vampire*, there is a disadvantage for the Western viewer in that the rules of this universe are foreign. But like spiciness in some Chinese food, for some the foreign-ness of the mythology will be a disadvantage and for others it will be the main advantage and the greatest attraction.

When I was about six years old there was a foreign-language movie theater in the town I lived in. I think it was Polish, but I don't remember for sure. And I found that frustrating because I imagined they had their equivalent of Godzilla films and I was missing them because there was this language barrier between me and the films. As I got older many of these mis-impressions became obvious to me and I realized I wasn't missing a whole lot of great monster movies because I knew only one language. Well, what I am discovering is that my fears were not so foolish, they just were premature. Today in Asia there are a lot of good fantasy films being made, many of which just are not making it to America for years or perhaps never make it. So far there are relatively few films I would miss, but the number is clearly growing.

## Maverick and The Crow

Two film reviews by Mark R. Leeper

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**Capsule review:** *As two adaptations from other media, these show that there may be a lot of potential for adapting comic books to the screen, but 1950s television is starting to be mined out. Certainly in this case we have a good adaptation of a comic book and a much less successful cinematic TV show. Ratings: Maverick gets a 0, The Crow a +1 (-4 to +4). However, Maverick may be more appropriate for a wider audience.*

It is now no longer much of a novelty to see either a 1950s television show like "Maverick" or a comic like "The Crow" adapted into a film version. One would expect that of the two, it would be easier to be faithful to the style of the dramatic medium on the screen. However, even speaking as someone who has not read "The Crow," I can say that at least in this instance the comic book form seems to have been better represented on the screen than the TV show.

*The Crow* seems set in a world where it is constantly a rainy night in Hell. Everything seems a little rain-drenched in the world of *The Crow*, but somehow the villainous Top Dollar (played by Mi-

chael Wincott) manages to get buildings to burn every year on October 30—Devil's Night—for clients who are willing to pay Top Dollar for the service. His thugs torch a building, raping a woman and murdering her and her husband-to-be, Eric (Brandon Lee). As myth would have it a crow transports their souls to the after-world, but returns Eric's soul one year later for him to exact terrible revenge on the evil gang. (One has to ask oneself if the indignant dead do sometimes return, why were there not armies of indignant dead chasing after Stalin and Hitler. Even murder and arson are crimes less deserving of the Crow-treatment.)

Visually this film is a powerful adaptation of the comic book form to the screen. Alex Proyas directs with many short cuts highly evocative of comic book panels. Every once in a while he will dwell on one majestic image, like the figure of Eric standing in a huge circular, broken window. He pauses on this image just about as long as a reader of the comic would pause on that panel. The screenplay takes little time to humanize any of its characters beyond perhaps making a little girl seem likable. This is one more story full of sound and fury and striking visual images, but it has little core and no characters of any emotional interest. Still it is bound to be remembered as a signpost showing the way to translate effectively the characteristics of a comic book to the screen. It deserves a +1 on the -4 to +4 scale. Extreme violence makes this a film for a narrow audience but it is a far more interesting transition to the screen than is *Maverick*.

Though more acceptable for a wider audience, *Maverick* is a film that also lacked core—but here it was needed far more. The TV show covered the adventures of two brothers, Bret and Bart Maverick, two likable gamblers. Bret was played by James Garner. When Warner Brothers needed someone to play Pappy Maverick, father of Bret and Bart, he too was played by James Garner. (There was a third brother, Brent, introduced after Garner walked off the series.) "Maverick" was played straight for a couple of seasons, then a humorous description in one of the scripts gave Garner the idea to play that scene tongue-in-cheek, a style that remained with him the rest of his career. But even with his good-humored acting, the stories usually were fairly well-written and well-thought-out. They were a lot better than the string of gag scenes that William Goldman wrote into the screenplay of the new adaptation. Mel Gibson as the new Bret Maverick goes from one minor adventure to another trying to get together the money to be in a giant high stakes poker game. There was no real plot complication in this

film until the last 40 minutes. Writer William Goldman has some good fun, and some that works not quite so well, doing to Western clichés what he did to adventure clichés with *The Princess Bride*, though they work only occasionally here. (Perhaps the best scene of the film is done in an Indian language and subtitled, lampooning Indian acting in so many bad films.) Far too many gags fall flat and plot devices fall flatter. Most of the film is told in flashback by a Bret with a noose around his neck. When this threat is resolved Bret has cheated the hangman not nearly so badly as Goldman has cheated the audience. James Garner is also on-hand and playing a major character, perhaps to keep an eye on what his Bret is up to. Playing lawman Zane Cooper, Garner is pretty much the laconic character he has always played. Jodie Foster plays Annabelle

Bransford, as capable of the double-cross as any of the men. There is certainly some fun here and some nice nature photography not really characteristic of the series. But with so little story this one gets no better than a 0 on the -4 to +4

## Red Rock West

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**Capsule review:** *Newcomer filmmakers John and Rick Dahl have the knack of really holding an audience's attention. This is a tense and twisty crime thriller worthy of Jim Thompson. Catch it quick because it is getting only a very short release.*

**Rating:** +2 (-4 to +4)

The Coen Brothers, Joel and Ethan, introduced themselves to the world of cinema with *Blood Simple*, an inexpensively made crime thriller set in Texas. Their next film was the comedy *Raising Arizona* and they never returned to their original style. Now two more brothers, John and Rick Dahl, have come on the scene with their own tightly-written crime thriller, and you can be certain these brothers will be around for a while. *Red Rock West* is a tense, edge-of-the-seat sort of crime film that could easily be taken for some Coen Brothers lost second film.

The action takes place entirely in or near the fly-speck Wyoming town of the title. Michael (nicely under-played by Nicholas Cage) comes to this area all the way from Texas for a promised job that evaporates when he is too honest about a knee injured during his time in the Marines. Out of luck and totally out of money he goes into Red Rock to see if he can get any kind of a job. There he meets

Wayne (J. T. Walsh). Wayne has hired someone named Lyle from Texas for a job. Wayne sees Michael's license plates and assumes this is Lyle. Michael decides to pretend to be Lyle and grab up the job first. Then Michael finds out what the job is. He has to murder Wayne's wife Suzanne (Lara Flynn Boyle). Then the plot twists start coming. And they keep on coming. In fact, except for one sex scene there isn't a five-minute section of film that doesn't have some sort of radical plot twist. Michael is one innocent and honest man who finds himself in a nest of biting vipers. He has just the one wish: to get out of Red Rock. That sounds simple, but time and again events drag him into the town. As he gets more and more deeply involved his chances of just staying alive become smaller and smaller. One of the marks of how suspenseful this film is was the nervous laughter in audience as twists are revealed. The film is plotted so that nearly every apparent loose end attaches someplace else, much like Scorsese's *After Hours*. After Cage's over-the-top performances in films like *Vampire's Kiss* it is nice to see him underplaying a little. Walsh also is nicely menacing. Only Dennis Hopper seems insufficiently restrained as a fellow ex-Marine who runs into Michael almost literally.

*Red Rock West* is a tidy little film noir thriller and an auspicious debut for the Brothers Dahl. The film has gotten only a very modest theatrical release and simultaneously is being released to video. Apparently no major distributor wanted to take a chance on it. With the reviews it has been getting there are going to be a lot of distribution executives looking for work in places like Red Rock, Wyoming. They should remember to find out what the new job is before they accept it.

Welcome to the film game, John and Rick. Stick around. I think you're gonna make it. I give *Red Rock West* a +2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

## The Slingshot

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**Capsule review:** *This is the story of a very bright boy growing up in Stockholm early this century. The Socialist activism of both his parents and the fact his mother is Jewish make him the butt of bullying from all directions. Still he manages to survive and bounce back. Rating: +2 (-4 to +4)*

Roland is a boy growing up in Stockholm in the 1920s (or so) with just about everything going against him. His father is a Socialist, his mother is a Russian Jew fighting an illegal battle for family

planning. Roland's father is an autocrat with little empathy for the boy. Roland's teachers are anti-Semitic and anti-Socialist and have little use for the boy except as a bad example and as a target for occasional sadistic corporal punishment. Roland's schoolmates cheat, exploit, and play cruel tricks on young Roland. And in spite of all this, Roland has an irrepressible spirit. He sometimes does fight back, but chooses his fights where he thinks they will do the most good. He also has an ingenious and a creative mind. The story always has the feel of an autobiography of somebody who achieved something great later in life. In fact, it is the adaptation of a semi-autobiographical novel by Roland Schütt, so we know he at least became a novelist. The book was adapted for the screen and directed by Ake Sandgren.

*The Slingshot* takes its title from one of many applications young Roland finds for the condoms that his mother illegally distributes. Without understanding the actual purpose for the devices, he is able to see in them and improvise several unexpected uses, each only getting him into deeper trouble. One keeps expecting somebody to notice the genius of the ten-year-old, much as the boy comes to be appreciated in *My Life as a Dog*, but this is not a film with simple answers and obvious scenes. Roland's rewards will be far more abstract and not so dependent on others.

Jesper Salen stars as Roland and manages a better performance with more depth than many better-recognized actors in this country give. Many actors his age just read lines and go through some motions for the camera. Jesper's acting is intelligent and convincing. You always have a feeling that there really are intelligent mental processes behind his actions. Stallen Skarsgard plays Fritof, the father who thinks himself a great liberal thinker but who runs his family like a despot.

While the film leaves the character of Zipa (Basia Frydman) at the stereotypical loving mother level, we do get to know a lot more of Roland's father. He is harsh and demanding of his sons. He is determined not to let a spinal condition, which is slowly taking away his ability to walk, undermine his control on his family. He is a walking (or nearly so) contradiction trying to hold on to some of the values of the past while trying to change the social order of his country. He despises the government while envying the trappings of being the king—trappings that he gets a chance to sample for himself. Roland is not a victim of the Holocaust and he lives in a country not generally associated with discrimination and bigotry. But the prejudice he faces

is clearly a major part of forming his character and his ability to remain strong and to rebound still makes for a moving story which I give a +2.

## Widows' Peak

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**Capsule review:** *The peace of a small post-WWI Irish village is shattered by the feud of two women in this picturesque comedy. As with many recent British films, the setting is the real star of this film. The plot twists are not as mysterious as they were intended to be. Rating: high +1 (-4 to +4).*

**Warning:** A very heavy spoiler follows the review.

In the 1920s, Kilshannon, Ireland, is a town dominated by rich widows. The hill at the center of the town has been given over entirely to the women and has been dubbed "Widows' Peak" by the locals. Of the elder female contingent, first among equals is Mrs. Doyle Couniha (played by Joan Plowright). The one non-widow on Widow's Peak is Katherine O'Hare (Mia Farrow), who was adopted by the other widows after an indiscretion earlier in her life. O'Hare is a quiet mousey woman who uncharacteristically takes an immediate dislike to newcomer Edwina Broome (Natasha Richardson). Even before Broome's arrival, O'Hare is finding reason to hate her and soon the two women are constantly at each others' throats, quite to the bemused amazement of Kilshannon.

The screenplay of *Widows' Peak* was written years ago for Maureen O'Hara to play O'Hare and for Mia Farrow to play Broome. Time passed and Farrow took the role originally written for her mother. It is really a pity it was not cast that way, since O'Hara had the fiery personality of O'Hare. One side effect is that Farrow has to sound Irish and Richardson has to sound American. It would not have been nearly as difficult for Farrow to sound American and her mother to sound Irish. Also, Farrow is far too quiet and introspective for the role. Richardson has a teaspoonful more personality, but neither actress can wrest the audience's attention from Plowright. Adrian Dunbar of *Hear My Song* is present, but a real disappointment in a role that gives him little chance to fulfill the promise he showed in that film.

One odd note: the film steals a joke from *Casablanca*. In a film set after 1943, it would have been considered a film allusion. *Widows' Peak* is set in the 1920s and that makes it a theft.

John Irvin directs taking maximum advantage of the small Irish town location. He builds texture into the film showing us scenes around the town, taking us to a local dance and to the town's regatta. He almost has Bill Forsythe's ability for making the town itself the star, but his town does not have quite enough personality to be really interesting. Now and again he does get off a clever piece of local color, like a fairly witty scene of all the widows in town visiting their husbands' graves at the same time, but it is not quite enough to make the town really engaging.

This is a film that is never so tricky as intended, but it is always watchable and usually quite fun. I give it a high +1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

## Spoiler...Spoiler...Spoiler...Spoiler...

What I found to be the greatest flaw in this film is what was for me almost its utter predictability. I knew that there were surprises coming, admittedly, but I have to say I figured the entire plot before we even saw the character of Mrs. Broome. I saw that Miss O'Hare behaves peculiarly negatively about the coming of Mrs. Broome. I thought of the demographics of the area, and I knew exactly what was happening. Even then it seemed to me that Richardson was giving too much away by making Mrs. Broome a terrible actress. (Okay, there were details about what was going on that were not available until later, but even there I was well ahead of the script.) In would not be fair to downrate the film because I guessed too early what was happening, but I think they could have done a better job of misleading me once I knew.

## The Vampire Companion: The Official Guide to Anne Rice's *The Vampire Chronicles*

by Katherine Ramsland  
Ballantine, ISBN 0-345-37922-5, 1993,  
US\$29.95.

A book review by Mark R. Leeper  
Copyright © 1993 Mark R. Leeper

I occasionally have this problem reading novels. I like to read just before bed. It relaxes me. Occasionally I even find myself falling asleep and waking up to find that the book has fallen on the floor.



That isn't the problem. The problem is that the next time I pick up the book I find I have no memory of what I read last evening. I can go back and skim and remember what I read, but that takes time. I have this tendency to lose continuity. I won't remember exactly who the characters are or what happened to them before. I have often wished I had the book on-line so I could search for some character's name and find what I have read about that character earlier. As you might imagine, I am not a big fan of mystery novels.

On the other hand one of the best books I ever read was *Njal's Saga*, an Icelandic saga of the 13th Century about a blood feud that took place in the 10th Century. I read it a little bit at a time over about five years. When it was over I felt I had been witness to a big chunk of history as well as a true epic. I never lost the continuity. Why not? Because the Penguin edition, translated by Magnus Magnusson, had this terrific appendix. For each character there was an entry telling what happened to that character, chapter by chapter. I could get quick reminders of what happened to that character in the last chapter and the chapter before and very quickly picked up the continuity, even if the last time I read a chapter was two months earlier. Without that appendix, the book would have been impossible to read. That book demonstrated to me the value of having a good guide to the characters in a book.

I read *Interview With the Vampire* when it first came out and enjoyed it, but never bothered with any of the sequels since they required memory of the first book really understand what was going on. For me, the chief value of Katherine Ramsland's *The Vampire Companion* will be as a memory aid in reading the books.

The book also serves another function, namely it tells a little something of the allusions made in the novel. Here *The Vampire Companion* may be a little less successful. In 26 words it explains who Leonardo da Vinci is. There is no way anybody could give a satisfying description of Leonardo in so short a space. At least it gives the reader a little bit that might prompt further reading, though to maintain the atmosphere there is no indication that Leonardo is real and that Laurant is a fictional character, though in this case it is obvious, of course since Laurant is a vampire and most people will already know of Leonardo (it would be hoped). But if that is the case, does a reminder of who Leonardo was serve any purpose?

There are some notable factual errors. For example, we are told that H. Rider Haggard's novel is *She: Who Must Be Adored*. The correct title is sim-

ply *She*.

Each entry is complete with a book and page reference. The page references are keyed to the paperback editions of the novels, making one wonder who is likely to read the novels in paperback, yet would still spend \$30 on a hardback guide to the contents.

Some of the entries are clearly of more interest than others, depending on how obscure the reference is. However, it is hard to tell an obscure real-world reference from one that is fictional. This book pretends that the Rice stories are true and treats entries for fictional people and places identically to references to real people. Of course, fans of Sherlock Holmes have done the same thing for years (at least since the 1930s). People have been doing the same thing with Santa Claus for a lot longer. C. Northcote Parkinson did it for Horatio Hornblower in his biography of C. S. Forster's character. Nonetheless, even with Sherlock Holmes the practice gets tiresome. It is a matter of taste, but I would have preferred Ramsland not to follow the same affectation.

The main text is a sort of dictionary of people, places, and things referred to in the stories. Following that is a timeline going back to 4,000 B.C. and up to 1992. It mixes events of the stories with publication dates of the books, again mixing fiction and reality. The next section is the "Vampire Atlas," showing maps of where events occur in the stories. I would like to think that some of these maps are somewhat unnecessary. Page 496 has a map of the Western Hemisphere showing things like where San Francisco is. Actually even there the maps are less than helpful. San Francisco is shown somewhat to the south of where it really is. St. Louis is shown a bit to the east of its actual location. Other maps show street layouts of San Francisco or New Orleans. It is hard to believe these high-level maps could be of all that much value in reading the stories.

The book ends with a bibliography.

While there are a few irritations in how this book is written, just going through the pages impresses one with how much vampire lore really is packed into Rice's novels. At a cost of about \$30, Ballantine may have put the book outside the reach of many of Rice's readers, but for those who pay the price the 500+ pages of reference material in the book should enhance the experience of reading the series. [★]





## Book and Tape Reviews~~ by Lan

### *Inferno*

by Mike Resnick

Tor Books, © 1993, \$20.95

*Inferno* is the third novel by Mike Resnick in his allegorical trilogy about Africa. This chronicles, in alien terms, the happenings in Uganda from the coming of the White Man to its several civil wars and insurrections.

Since Faligor had indigenous life, the prospect of colonizing it was removed, but Susan Beddoes, and her associate Arthur Cartwright, both members of the Republic of Man (Department of Cartography) were able to bring up its civilization close to Galactic standards within a single generation. But the power that came with this influx of knowledge and technology had the usual effect of corrupting the leaders first benevolently, then as *coup* after *coup* happened, more violently and with increasing bloodshed. What was one of the richest planets in their section of the galaxy became a bloodbath of alien death. Arthur and Susan could only watch in horror as they world they sought to keep a paradise turned into Hell.

As usual with any Resnick novel, there is a subtext which is represented involving some moral issues. Helping the less fortunate (in this case a civilization considered backward to ours) is a noble cause, but one must not get carried away too much. Imposing ones culture on another's is the worst offense. The culture of the Faligorians was tribal in nature; giving one tribe (even if it was the most advanced) gave them an advantage to suppress the others. The attempt to create a global government failed because there was no time given to break down tribal barriers and subcultural differences. The intellectual elite could understand the reasons for putting aside such differences, but the common people, and those whose loyalty has been tribal in nature for generations, did not have the mind-set to accept and pursue a unified global government. The

best of intentions did not forestall the bloodshed.

Of course, you need not necessarily pick up the subtext to enjoy the book. It is a fast-paced read of the history of a planet which concentrates on some interesting characters. I recommend it.

### *Mirror Dance*

by Lois McMaster Bujold

Baen Books, © 1994, \$21.00

Miles Vorkosigan runs to rescue his clone brother Mark who, pretending to be Miles, has mounted a mission with the Dendarii to return to Jackson's Whole and kidnap the clones that had been created as replacement bodies for "the rich and powerful". Things go terribly awry, and Miles is incapacitated for much of the book, and the novel becomes a stage for Mark. While the search for Miles goes on, the focus of the story is Mark's coming to terms with himself and establishing his own identity within the Vorkosigan household.

This latest novel from Lois McMaster Bujold deepens the reader's understanding of Miles, Mark, and many of the other characters she has created in her universe. Miles is the main reason that most readers pick up Lois' books; they won't be disappointed with this novel, even though Miles is pushed to the background for the majority of the action. There is enough of him shown to satisfy, and a lot is done with Miles' personality to contrast with Mark's search for his. Highly recommended, and possibly a Hugo nominee.

### *Reefsong*

by Carol Severance

DelRay Books, © 1991, \$4.99

Angie Dinsman was a troubleshooter for the U.N.. She was the best, and looked after her own interests as well. Although she was urged to take a

particularly difficult job off-planet, her ties to Earth were too strong for her to accept it. However, an accident which the World Life Company used to their advantage gave her an opportunity to do some good for the UN, for the water world of Lesaat, and herself. But the inhabitants of Lesaat distrusted any human with implanted gills and grafted tentacular hands, yet they needed to do so, if they truly wanted to save their own world.

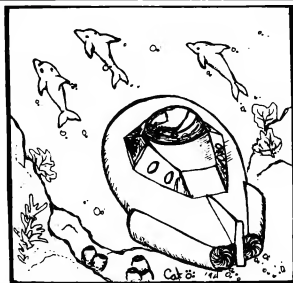
This was my first encounter with Carol's work and when I found out that she won the Crompton Crook Award for best first novel, I had to agree with the judges. This one is a knockout. Aside from the well-developed main characters, and a reasonable, believable plot which uses the alien planet background effectively, Ms. Severance draws on her knowledge and background of the Hawaiian, Mauri, and Pacific people cultures to blend a well-rounded culture for the inhabitants of Lesaat. There is plenty of action, an intriguing plot for those who like mysteries and problem-solving, and a good study of the psychology and sociology of the people and characters. A superb novel, too late for a Hugo nomination, but an indication that Carol Severance is someone whose books should be read.



## Half the Day is Night

by Maureen F. McHugh  
TOR Books, © 1994, \$21.95

This second novel by Maureen F. McHugh (actually her first written) deals with a third-world country ("as do most of my stories," she says smiling). This time it is the undersea cities of the Caribe in the Caribbean. David Dai is a war veteran from Europe who comes to work as a bodyguard for bank consultant Mayla Ling. His work, which he feels he is unqualified for, wraps him in a seri-



ous cloak and dagger intrigue which nearly kills him, his employer, and his cat. Although he is sought after by the Police as the one who engineered the attempted murder of Mayla (we know he didn't do it), he manages to elude their grasp. Then Mayla's activities puts her on the outs with the bank, and she needs to escape too. Can she follow David's path to anonymity in such an enclosed environment?

This novel has more action and, I think, interest than Maureen's first published novel, *China Mountain Zhang*. The characters move in sometimes predictable, sometimes mysterious ways, but there is no questioning that they are human and have their faults. The plot is not necessarily simplistic, but serves as a vehicle for the reader to experience life in the undersea cities, and the fear one can feel from an oppressed culture.

I recommend this, and look forward to her next novel.

## Shouting Theater in a Crowded Fire

by Nancy Louise Freeman  
Barking Gecko Productions, © 1991, \$10.00  
(1960 W. Keating Ave., Apt 172, Mesa AZ 85202)

I met Nancy for the first time at the Worldcon in Winnipeg. The Filk Programming at **Conadian** allowed for many mini-concert slots and a variety of filkers took advantage of the opportunity to display their talents. An added incentive for me to listen to Nancy Freeman was that she was Andrea's roommate for the con. I was glad to discover Nancy

to be a nice person, and talented.

This is a self-produced tape, and there are signs of that. The tracks do not have the *polished* sound of being recorded in a studio. But that aside, Nancy has a high, clear soprano (unlike the screeching that comes out at times with others who sing high). It is fairly easy to make out the words, and the melodies are pleasant. However, like most singers who stay in the same vocal range, the sound can wear on the nerves. Still, I found that there was enough variation, along with a variety of arrangements (Nancy also played recorder and horn, as well as guitar, and had written all the songs she sings), to make this tape an interesting excursion.

There are places where Nancy could have tried re-recording until it was perfect--her voice was shaky, particularly on "Sleep No More" where there are several key changes, but she has improved since the tape was made; I heard her sing much better at the Worldcon than any song on this tape. I expect the next tape to display her much-improved voice.

## Domino Death

by Tom Smith

Dodeka Records, Ltd., © 1994, \$12.00

Tom Smith has a huge following of filkers and fans. His humor is well-known, and among filk-writers his speed in producing songs is legendary. However, when it comes to putting out tapes, the time between them is inversely proportional to the time it takes him to write a rebuttal to a song directed at him. So fans were eagerly awaiting this tape, and no matter how good or bad, it was going to sell.

Fortunately, this tape is mostly good. The title song, "Domino Death" about pizza delivery, is a mainstay of his concerts, and many of the other songs people have heard on and off at filkings and his recitals. But I have some quibbles about the tape, and it won't matter what I say, since I know his fans will buy it regardless. (*I bought it, and at the time I was unconcerned about what I am going to say now!*)

I liked the mixture of serious and humorous songs. There were, however, some vocal problems. One of the bad habits that Tom has developed is not cutting off a note cleanly, but dropping an octave with "ah". He doesn't do it often, but enough that once noticed, it becomes irritating. There is a noticeable difference between the songs recorded in concert and those done in a studio, and I mean more than audience responses. I dearly love Anne

Schneider, Tom's partner and back-up in two tracks ("I Wish I Couldn't Read Her Mind" and "Heat of the Blood"), but I had a problem with her vibrato on the high notes (a personal quirk--I can't listen to Maria Callas or Buffy St. Marie for that reason). Still, the songs themselves were good, and extremely effective despite my personal misgivings.

Some fans may be surprised at the serious songs, and how good they are. "Starlight and Saxophone" is a bittersweet story of love, desire, and the pursuit of a dream. "Storm Dancing" is similar in theme, but very different in execution. One of the things which many new writers of fiction do not take into consideration is the effects of some significant event in their main character's life. There should be some change in the person. Tom tells the story of a woman who experiences living and dancing, and he poignantly shows the change in her afterwards. Truly, this is an amazing song.

Overall, it is a tape with variety and style. Old and new fans of Tom Smith will get it, and they won't be disappointed. Tom keeps getting better, and I trust that the next tape will be better still.

## Songspinner

by Steve Macdonald

Dodeka Records, Ltd., © 1994, \$12.00



Steve is a relatively new filker on the scene, though he has been playing bars for quite a while. Thus his background is similar to Marty Burke's, though he is a tenor, as opposed to Marty's baritone. His voice is clear and powerful, and his songs are authored by himself, or in collaboration with his brother John. His guitar-playing is superb, and that is evident as the first song begins.

There are a few problems--mostly from the engineering--which detract a little from the overall production. The guitar parts are sometimes too acute, overshadowing the melody. At times the background supports aren't heard, unless in the proper environment. I mostly listened to the tape in my car to and from work, and not until I heard it on my home system did I hear the "doo-wop" support on "I Just Love Those Old B-Movies", and background harmonies on other songs.

Setting those things aside, the tape is a good sampling of one of the hot new filkers in fandom. He has talent to go around, and his next tape should be better.

## The Pegasus Winners Collection 1 Tape & Songbook

Various Artists

Love Song Productions, © 1994, \$12.00/tape,  
\$10.00/Songbook

This set of tape and songbook of the Pegasus Winners was a special perquisite for those registered for **Ohio Valley Filk Fest X**. This filk convention is where the Pegasus Awards are given. These awards are determined somewhat like the Hugos; those registered for the con for that year have voting rights. Thus each year a Best Song, Best Performer, and Best Writer are chosen, as well as winner in two other categories. This tape and songbook are compilations of most of the winners of the awards for the 9 years that OVFF has been in existence, and made as a special gift for those attending OVFF 10.

As a sampling of the best in filk, this is a treasure. Some of the songs were specially recorded for this project. The new arrangements of Julia Ecklar's "God Lives on Terra", "Daddy's Little Girl" and "Temper of Revenge" with Robin Stockton on harp improve on the originals. Tom Smith's "A Boy and His Frog/Rainbow Connection" coupling takes the listener's emotions from sorrow to joy and is among the best Tom has done. Others are also very good.

On the other hand, there are some less-than-satisfactory cuts. The harmony for Kathy Mar's "Velveteen" sounds like it was slapped together and needed a lot more work. Although T.J. Burnside's "Weekend Only World" was wonderful, her voice was drowned out by the harmony on "Lullaby for a Weary World." This version of "Lightsailor" by Barry Childs-Helton and Mary Ellen Wessels was not the one to use; there were two major goofs on this live recording, and for a tape purporting to have "the best" this is inexcusable.

And I must be one of the only persons in filk who does not like "Hope Eyrie", and this particular recording was weaker than many I've heard.

On the other hand, what's good here is very good. Overall, it is a worthwhile tape and a good introduction to what filk has become. There is less humor than what happens in a filksing, but that is not bad. Maybe the second collection will correct that, and re-issue some of the poorly recorded ones

from this tape.

The Songbook has 23 of the 27 Pegasus winners (the tape 17 out of 27), complete with words, music and chords (except for the two "walking blues" numbers). For those who want to learn the songs, this is a good pairing.



## Owling at the Moon

by Bill and Brenda Sutton  
Dodeka Records Ltd., © 1994, \$12.00

Bill and Brenda have been slowly improving their skills singing and composing. On this, their latest tape (and the first one together), they draw on some old and some new material to tantalize their listeners and fans. There is a lot of variety in both the serious and humorous selections. One of the loveliest melodies is "UnChanson Sans Amour" whose lyrics are indeed "without love". The translation makes it one of the funniest songs on the tape (somewhat akin to the dichotomy of lyrics and music in Tom Smith's "Walking Along").

The blend of harmonies that these two have achieved leave the listener (namely ME) wanting more by the end. I'll play this one out till the next one comes along.

## The Guns of the South

by Harry Turtledove  
Ballantine/SFBC, © 1992, \$21.95

Harry Turtledove is one of the few master writers of alternate history. Too many ignore the full implications of the history they alter, forgetting that many of the people in power today may not have any significance of history is altered 20 or more years earlier. Turtledove does not make this mistake. He stays firmly in the past and follows through on his premise of altering history.

The Southern Confederacy is not doing well in the war against the Northern states, but a group of men from the future, a group known as America Will Break, arrive and supply the Confederate army with AK-47s and some other marvels of things to come. So the South wins its separation from the rest of the United States, and the trouble organizing and consolidating the new country begins. Still, General Lee and President Jefferson Davis realize that slavery's days are numbered, and that doesn't fit well into the scheme the ABC men have. There soon erupts an internal conflict as the Confederate

States of America seeks to free itself from the thumb of the men from the future.

There are several minor characters who play major roles in the events that happened, and Turtle-dove doesn't skimp on characterization here. The story follows logically, and, with a few surprises, comes to a satisfying end.

I did not read this immediately when it came out. I am not a big fan of alternate histories, and I find most modern history texts boring. I was sorta pushed into reading this as several colleagues of mine at school had read it, and were discussing it. Out of self defense I pulled my copy from the library shelf in my basement, and read it. I was delighted. I knew that it pleased both SF fans and Military History fans, because at **Confrancisco** I heard Moshe Feder tell Harry that he had managed to buy the rights for *The Guns of the South* for both the Science Fiction Book Club and the Military History Book Club, and it was a "best seller" for both. That's a recommendation in itself.

## Curse of the Mistwraith

by Janny Wurts

RoC, © 1994 (1993), \$22.00

This is the first book of a five book series. Each one, according to Janny, will stand alone, but the story that is being told is of epic proportions, and every scene, every word even, is important.

Two half-brothers are warring against each other. Anthon is born of a pirate, trained as a mage dedicated to darkness. He also has inherent abilities in music, and a desire to preserve the rights of individuals. Lysaer is born of a King and a controller of Light, though untrained in its control. His personality mandates that justice be done, regardless of individual rights. As opposites they are transported to another world where only they, working together, can release the world from the grip of darkness, the curse of the Mistwraith which has enveloped all. But in the process, a full scale war must happen, and they end up on opposite sides.

The richness of the background, the detail of the characterization, even of some of the minor characters, is amazing. Janny draws on her considerable talents in writing, art, music, horsemanship, and a dozen other areas to create a living world inhabited by living people. The next novel will continue the adventures started here, and it should remain exciting throughout the five books. Janny said

that the next novel, *The Ships of Merior*, is 1400 manuscript pages, and the editors have not cut a word. That is good news.



## Ten Years of Filk A Discography of Performers

Compiled by Glen Simser

Taper Press, © 1994, \$10.00(?)  
(510-30 Eleanor Dr., Nepean, Ontario K2E 7E5  
CANADA)

This is a marvelous reference book that Glenn has put together. If you want to know where to find a song by your favorite filk artist you can look up the singer's name and find out which tape (or tapes) that song is on. The lists cross-reference over 250 individual filk tapes, most of which are still in print, though they may be difficult to find. This is a project worthy of the support of filkers, and the book is well worth the price unless you have done similar work for yourself already.

## Cheap Hooch

by Dandelion Wine

Dandelion Wine, © 1994, C\$17.00  
(The Bhigg House, 337 Oxford Street, Winnipeg,  
Manitoba R3M 3H9 CANADA)

The first album that Dandelion Wine put out was *Circles in the Grain*. It was extremely well received in the filk and fan community, and the group was quickly urged to put out a second tape. Well, it isn't exactly a tape, but a compact disk, and this one is better. The group is more "together", the harmonies are much cleaner, and the overall production is extremely well done. Although not all the songs were written by the group, several were, they drew on a large variety of known, and not so well known writers of Canadian folk music.

Here is an album to delight the ears and senses, the mind and heart. I highly recommend it.

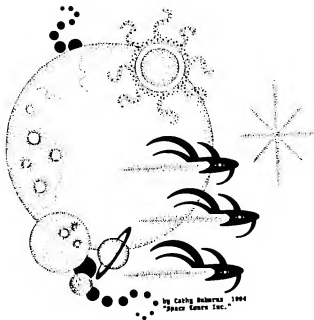
## Inner, Stellar

by Fred Becker

Mach 25 Music, © 1991, \$16.00 (?)  
(PO Box 26331, Indianapolis, IN 46226 USA)

Purely instrumental music is not widely used in the filk community. Occasionally there is a single cut on a tape/album which is purely instrumental, or a longer piece like Joe Ellis' *The Dream Is Alive*, but for the most part fans avoid the instrumental piece and concentrate on lyrics.

Fred Becker's CD, *Inner, Stellar*, is purely instrumental, all composed and played by him. Everything is done electronically, and the phrasing, harmonics, rhythms and sounds blend into sometimes eerie, sometimes relaxing music. It is definitely "new age" style, though I found it good merely to listen to as background while doing other things.



by Cathy Beltrami © 1994  
Space Emery Inc.

This doesn't mean that I didn't find interesting musical passages that grabbed by attention. Those are there, but once noticed they fade into the mind as part of the background of what I am doing until the next one jumps out.

The only major quibble I have is the number of "glitches" in the lengthy (27:33) "Break-throughs" where the division from one recorded section to the next (obvious continuations) is broken--sort of like a record skip/scratch. Aside from that, I found the CD very good.

## Woad Warrior

Live Recordings from Silvercon 2,  
Las Vegas, Nevada

Various Artists

Dandelion Digital, © 1993, \$16.00 (?)  
(Leonard N. Zubkoff, 3078 Sulphur Spring Court,  
San Jose, CA 95148)

The Dandelion Digital philosophy for its recording is to provide music to a listener as if they were in a front-row concert seat at a live performance. Thus occasional glitches will occur just as in a live performance, but most often the musical energy of the concert is captured. DD's recordings are mostly from live performances, though there is the occasional studio production of a song (or entire CD; see below). This makes for a more interesting recording, and also for more forgiveness of the glitches, slightly-off harmony, botched lyrics, and out-of-tune guitars.

The conglomeration of artists for this first CD from Dandelion Digital is amazing. They brought together some legends in filk with some (to me at the time) unknowns, and blended a very good first recording. Larry Warner (one of the best baritones in filk), Joey Shoji (the best tenor in filk), Kathy Mar (whose sultry voice keeps getting better), Julia Ecklar a legendary filker with an excellent voice, on her way to becoming an excellent writer), Midlife Crisis (exemplary showman Dr. Jane Robinson and "the Vivaldi of Filk" Cynthia McQuillin), are joined with Paul Mehle and the Duras Sisters to produce an enjoyable hour-plus worth of music.

As a sampler of things-to-come from Dandelion Digital, this holds great promise. *Woad Warrior* can also be used as a good introduction to filk.



## Larry Warner on Deck #11

by Larry Warner

Dandelion Digital, © 1994, \$16.00 (?)

Larry Warner has collected a number of the songs that have been written about *Star Trek* in all its forms. These include the original series, the films, some of the amateur fiction that was written, *Next Generation* and *Deep Space Nine*. The songs show the variety and richness, not only of the shows, but also of the fans. As an introduction to the "filk of *Star Trek*", this is a marvelous sample.

The CD is also a showcase for Larry and his talents. The song "It's the Life" is about Quark from *Deep Space Nine*, and Larry sounds like the character. He also manages to change his voice enough to sound like Deanna Troi in "Take My Advice", Harry Mudd in "Harry's Dilemma", Worf in "K'Ehleyr", and the kid from "Miri" in "Follow the Leader". Less successful is his Julian Bashir imitation in "Trilled to be Here", and Scotty in "Relics". On the whole, I found this to be much more interesting than I thought it would be, though, as a fan of Larry Warner, I would have picked this up anyway. I am delighted to find it worth listening to several times.

## Masquerading as Human

by The Duras Sisters

Dandelion Digital, © 1994, \$16.00 (?)

The Duras Sisters are three fans with very good voices: Elizabeth Nurnham, Chris Dickenson, and Deborah Baudoin. The sing mostly a *cappella* with occasional guitar accompaniment. Overall, the group is very good. The harmonies are balanced, and in many cases very tight. They need to work a little on balance and blending, and the occasional odd note, but for the most part they are cooperating as a group.

Most of the songs on this CD are authored, or co-authored, but one of TDS. The others are well-chosen for a trio of voices. The downside of this is that every time I thought they had their own style, the sang a song made popular by someone else. For example, After a moving song written by Deborah Baudoin, "Battle Lines", they launch into "How Can I Keep from Singing?" which I heard done by Sally Rogers and Claudia Schmidt. "What She Said" and "Relics", both by Larry Warner, are, I think, best left for single voice. "Bella



Chow" by Cynthia McQuillin, and "Fossil Fever" by Jane Robinson, sound too much like the original arrangements to establish their own voice, although I must admit they have a nice spin on the arrangement of "Fossil Fever". And "Star Sisters" is very close to Technical Difficulties' version of the song. On the other hand, they do sound good with what they do, so I encourage them to continue to work together.

## Crosstown Bus Live Recordings from Baycon '93, San Jose, California

Various Artists

Dandelion Digital, © 1994, \$16.00 (?)

The tradition of compiling the best music of a particular convention continues to be one of the best ways to hear what is being done in filk in various areas of the country. This CD from the '93 **Baycon** has a wealth of good songs and talent. True, there are a few cuts of lesser quality, but the good ones are excellent. Heather Alexander and Kathy Mar turn in strong performances, as do Mid-Life Crisis and Heather Rose Jones' "Planxty Oncia", a harp solo, is exquisite, and, in my opinion, probably the best track on the CD.

Included here are also some groups which



seemed to be put together to harmonize for one or two songs. For the most part the groups work, though much more practice was needed. On the other hand, the philosophy behind Dandelion Digital comes into play here, and the listener can easily tell that the people are having fun doing the songs. In particular "(He's) Not on the Net" (written by Lynn Gold) is done by N Strings Attached is a little off in the harmony, but the enthusiasm and fun of the performance comes through in the presentation.

If someone wants to hear a good sampling of what is going on in West Coast filking, this fills that need.

## Made by Magic

by Kathy Mar and Zander Nyrond

Dandelion Digital, © 1994, \$16.00 (?)

This CD is a mixed bag. Kathy Mar is at the top of her form, and her tracks are excellent. Zander, as a performer, is relatively new to North American filkers, and his work on the CD is spotty. He is fine on some tracks (particularly the comedy ones), but less so on others. Those who happened to be at the **Ohio Valley Filk Fest** when Zander was the Interfilk Guest will remember his concert. As a live performer, he is excellent, and he can play the audience. This doesn't come through as well in hard recordings. However, if you have an imagination to put these songs, particularly Zander's, in a performance setting (which is the desired effect for Dandelion Digital), you will get a better sense of what the two of them can do. Still, his voice sounds flat against Kathy's full range and rich tones.

Technically in terms of recording and arrangements, the songs are quite good. Zander plays keyboards and synthesizer, and Kathy is never without her guitar. Mary Ellen Wessels and Folly Smith add their voices to the background, with additional vocals by Barry Childs-Helton. Barry supplies his guitar virtuosity, his wife Sally supports on drums and other percussion instruments, and Bill Rintz bows his fiddle and plucks his mandolin, all to help make the *magic* happen on this CD.



## The Magic Carpet Songbook

by Andrea D. Yeomans

Andrea D. Yeomans, ©1984, \$7.00  
4014 Georgetown Road, Cincinnati, OH 45236

This little songbook contains the lyrics and chords to 10 of Andrea's best songs. Although the melody lines are not included ("That will have to wait until version 2.0," she says smiling), it is still good to get at least the chords and lyrics so one can work out the rhythms and patterns on one's own. And listening to Andrea sing while following the words is always fun. Many of her songs do not lend themselves much to participation (except "Homer the Traveling Teddy Bear"), mostly because it was sometimes difficult to understand the words as she sang. However, now with this songbook, and with Andrea enunciating more (she has gotten a lot better with this), it is easier to join in.

And write parodies.

The book is well-designed with room to write notes both on the lyric/chord page as well as the facing page. If you have heard Andrea sing, and want the lyrics to her songs, this is for you.

## Moonspeaker

by K. D. Wentworth

DelRey, © 1994, \$4.99

Haemas Sennay Tal is a young girl not quite come of age when she kills her father Dervlin Tal with a mid-blast. Or so she thinks. Her memory is altered by her cousin Jarid (who only manages to wound Dervlin), but the feeling she had committed the murder is so strong and so real to her that she takes flight, past the barrier which keeps the chierra, the non-mind talented, from the mountains where the psi-talented Kashi live.

Although Haemus seeks to hide among the chierra, her appearance and six fingers makes that impossible. The altered memory has closed off much of her talents, so she cannot project a safe image to the non-talents. And the Kashi council won't let this crime go unavenged. So a "searcher" named Kevisson is sent to find her. But Jarid wants to get to Haemus before anyone else does and prevent her from helping them finding out that it was he who had almost killed Dervlin. But others also seek her out, for the untapped talent she does have is needed to hold timelines in check--timelines that the Kashi

men are meddling with, and could destroy everything on the planet.

This novel is a "grabber" from start to finish. It moves quickly, but also has some very lovely descriptive passages which are worth slowing down to savor. The plot is character as well as action driven, and the end is quite satisfying in most senses. One wishes that Haemus could come out a little better than she does. In this way the novel seems a bit more "realistic" (it's difficult for a fantasy world to be "realistic").

This second novel by K.D. is definitely fantasy fiction, though a case could be made for it being science fiction (much like Bradley's *Darkover* books). This is different than her first novel, *The Imperium Game* which was definitely SF. But those familiar with K.D.'s shorter works know she is equally at home in writing both. I found this one better than her first one, which is a good sign. I expect the third novel to be better yet.

## Three for Space

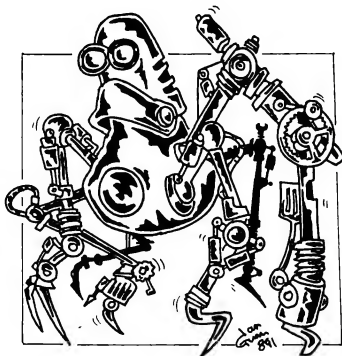
by William F. Nolan

Gryphon Books, © 1992, \$9.95  
Gryphon Publications, PO Box 209, Brooklyn, NY  
11228-0209

The name William F. Nolan may be familiar to some people. He has written several TV and movie scripts, has had well over a hundred short stories published in different magazines, written several novels, and is probably most noted for *Logan's Run*, both the original film and the TV series. In addition, he created "Space".

The "Space" in the title of this short story collection refers to Sam Space, a private investigator on Mars who takes on various cases in hopes of getting out from under debt, getting girls, getting replacement parts for his robot secretary and hovercar, and maybe getting a permanent pairmate. This collection contains three cases which Sam handles in the same way as his parodied namesake, Sam Spade. There is the same tongue-in-cheek humor, and the same sketchy descriptions, just enough to get the idea, but allow for a lot of imagination. In these adventures, Sam manages to save the Solar System in "Sungrab", his home planet of Earth in "Deadtrip", and his adopted planet of Mars in "Moonjob". And in one way or another, he gets the girl.

This slim volume is really for collectors. The Sam Space character, developed by Nolan, was



featured in two novels, *Space for Hire* and *Look Out for Space*. Two of these stories ("Sungrab" and "Deadtrip") have been previously published, though, like the novels, they would be difficult to find. "Moonjob" was written for this collection. This isn't great literature, but the stories are fun, which is a lot better than dull stories having pretensions (delusions?) of great literature.

I recommend this to lovers of the very small subgenre of science fiction, the SF PI.

## Urban Tapestry Songbook

by Urban Tapestry

Urban Tapestry, © 1994, US\$14.00  
Village by the Grange, 55 McCaul St., Box 123,  
Toronto, Ontario, CANADA M5T 2W7

This enormous tome (120 pages plus covers) of songs, chords and melody lines for the songs that this group sings, is a bargain for the price. All the songs that are on their tape are included, but there is so much more. Aside from the photograph collages (put together by Allison Durno), the cartoons (drawn by Debbie Ridpath Ohi) and the cover art (by Ruth Ohi), there are included the known and existing parody lyrics, and notes about each of the songs. For the fans of Urban Tapestry (a rapidly growing group, as new ones are added each time this group is heard), this is a "must-have" collec-

tion. For any filker, this is a marvelous addition to any library.

Lest you think that only Allison and Debbie did any work on this volume, the third member of UT, Jodi Krangle, made sure that the actual book came out in time for the 1995 *Confusion*; she supervised the production and printing. So this, like all their endeavors so far, has been truly a group effort.



## A Miracle of Rare Design

by Mike Resnick  
Tor, © 1994, \$21.95

Mike has admitted to writing moral parables. He also admits that the only stories worth writing are those in which the human heart is in conflict with itself. He goes beyond both of these guidelines in his latest novel, *A Miracle of Rare Design*, and examines not only the Human condition, what it means to be "Man", but also what it means to be "not Man".

Xaviar William Lennox is a travel writer who researches his books by living with aliens, and transgressing their taboos. After he nearly loses his life on Medina, while attempting to witness their religious ceremonies which were strictly off limits to humans, his desire to return is increased. The danger only heightened his interest and curiosity. The Bureau of Alien Affairs offers him an opportunity to return to Medina, with an increase in his chances for survival, so he can observe and live with the Fireflies as one of them. Xaviar undergoes a surgical alteration of his body, and lives among the Fireflies, and learns. What he learns is dubious, for he is still too much a Man to understand what it means to be a Firefly. But the experience leaves him wanting more. And he willingly undergoes

more transformations.

Mike, I think, has gone beyond the usual good stories he writes, and has touched something infinite. My sense of wonder was more than satisfied with this novel; I found myself in awe of the considerations of Man-ness, Alien-ness, what the future might bring that is wonderful and horrible, but ultimately fascinating. Mike's imagination has seen the miracles of the future, and he has shared them with us.

For me, this is a definite Hugo nominee. [★]

## To The Point

by On The Mark  
c/o Monica Cellio, ©1997, \$?? ??  
7634 Westmoreland Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15218  
A tape review by Bill Bacher

One of the most interesting aspects of filk music is the tremendous diversity in background, both musically and otherwise, of the people drawn to it. The filk community welcomes all people who want to play, and therefore many different styles of music, many cultural varieties are brought forward..

This is at once the greatest asset filk music can claim to have: Filk is the blending of a variety of styles of music, that variety being the key to the originality found within the music. Filk is the product evolving out of the blending of every musical form combined with the influence of things like science fiction.

For an analogy, consider a tornado. A tornado is a phenomenon that occurs when two separate weather patterns collide. The tornado is seen at the exact spot in the sky where the two fronts meet, growing out of the collision. Similarly, the filk phenomenon grows out of the collision of musical heritages that are commonly present at a filksing with other concepts.

Filk is, therefore, a continual process. As long as new people sit in at filksings, and new performers come in, new ideas will forever be available. This process can forever insure that filk music will remain a free-flowing, evolving art form, capable of great range.

On The Mark is a group from the Pittsburgh area that is interested in performing a mix of filk, contemporary and traditional folk, and other things. Their first release, *To The Point*, is a very nice blend of their own original music and songs by people like Fred Small, Mercedes Lackey, Rudyard Kipling, and Peter & Lou Barryman. They also

throw in a couple of very old songs, and one rather new (Star Trek) song. Instrumentation is acoustic, except for a keyboard on some of the newer songs.

*To the Point* illustrates the above-mentioned concept of how folk tends to grow out of folk traditions. One of the goals of the band, according to Monica Cellio (it's director and dulcimer player), is to cross boundaries by exposing folk listeners to folk, and vice versa. By combining old songs such as Dargason/Rose is White and Rose is Red (collected in 1650), onto the same tape with songs like "If I were a Moose" (Fred Small, 1988), and "Miracle Worker" (Julia Ecklar, 1983), *On The Mark* has certainly made the Mark (and the Point)!

*To the Point* is the first release of this group of five people. It is a thoroughly professional work, both in the group's performance and in the clean, clear sound of the tape. An attractive line drawing by Robin Wood decorates the cover.

*On The Mark* is made up of Monica Cellio, Andrea Gansley-Ortiz, Robert Smith, Kathy van Stone, and Marion Kee, with guest Eliot Moss. It is truly a pleasure to find a group with this philosophy,

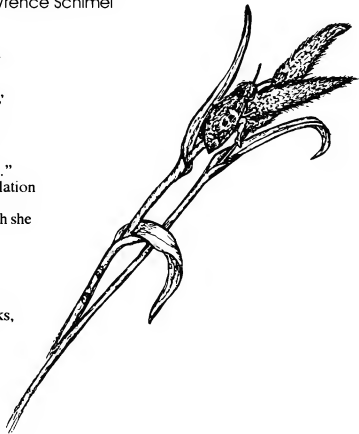
working to preserve the past by expanding it into the future. [★]



## The Writer Meets His Editor in the Supermarket

by Lawrence Schimel

The editor stand contemplating cabbage when someone taps her on the shoulder, and hands her an avocado. She turns and is greeted by one of her authors, smiling. "Hi," he says to her, "I didn't know you shopped here, too." "Yes," the editor answers, "it's about all I can afford." He grins ruefully in sympathy, then wanders off, saying, "I must run fix dinner before my wife gets home--they have her working late this week." "Bye," the editor says, returning to her contemplation of green or red. She is slightly unnerved by the unexpected encounter, disquieted, although she is not entirely sure why. She counts the items in her cart, and decides they will suffice, since she can still use the express lane. At the checkout, the girl at the register asks, "Do you have a coupon for this manuscript?" So, that is what had disturbed her, the editor thinks, as she stares at the manuscript, reflecting that he did not even include an SASE.



# Conreports and Ramblings 43

February 1994 to January 1995

by Lan

In *Lan's Lantern* #42, I stopped my Ramblings just before **Capricon**, and said I would pick up there. So I am continuing the life and times of Lan and his friends, whoever, wherever and whatever that might be. --Lan

## CAPRICON

I managed to get the librarians at Cranbrook to cover my classes on Friday, February 11, so I could drive out to Chicago and **Capricon**. I had no trouble getting there, except at the exit from the freeway I saw the hotel straight ahead, but couldn't drive directly to it. The entrance to the complex was about a half-mile east, and it didn't take me long to find it.

After checking in to the hotel I encountered Bruce Schnaier who was surprised to see me at the con. He asked immediately about Maia, and I told him she wasn't going to make it. I found my room, dumped my stuff, then went in search of convention registration. It would be a while before things were set up, so I found the Green Room and Kathy Nerat who was programming chairman. She was elated that I had gotten there so early--I could be on the 12 PM panel with Fred Pohl, Betty Ann Hull and Connie Willis. It was only 10:45 at that point. When I checked the program book which was sitting on one of the tables, I mentioned that the panel, "The Golden Age of SF" was scheduled for 11 AM. Kathy was upset because she remembered scheduling it for noon.

I went down to the consuite to get something to drink and wolf down a few munchies, and about 11:10 Kathy came up to me and with an apologetic look on her face, said that she had made the mistake, the panel really was at 11:00, and could I please join the others. I said sure, and carried my coffee and snacks with me.

Connie Willis looked surprised when I came in, walked up to the table and sat down next to her. Fred and Betty Ann both said hello, and when Connie finished with her statements, I told everyone about the mix-up. Betty Ann introduced me to the audience and to Connie, and we commenced with the panel. Not knowing what had been said before, I said that the "Golden Age" for each person may be a different time, but usually it's the age when

each one discovers SF/F. For the literature, it's the time of the 30s to 50s. We discussed some books and stories that were important in that time frame, and tried to agree on what we could term as "Golden Age" stories--things that people should read or at least be aware of that are important to the field. At least one of the four of us disagreed with most stories that anyone put forth, including such classics as "The Cold Equations" by Tom Godwin, "The Enchanted Village" by A.E. Van Vogt, and "A Martian Odyssey" by Stanley Weinbaum. I think we all did agree on "A Rose for Ecclesiastes" by Roger Zelazny.

Afterwards, I registered for the con, wandered around talking to different people, and familiarized myself with the hotel, The Wyndham Hotel is a hollow box with all the rooms facing the inside atrium. Sound at night does carry, but on the whole it was pretty quiet in my room. There were several places to eat within the hotel area, including a snack bar in the atrium which remained open for 24-hours during the con. Late that night I got to talking with a couple of the concomm members, and found out that several people, like me, found orange water coming out of the faucets when they first turned them on. Rick said that any room above the third or fourth floor was rarely used, indicating that the hotel doesn't get filled very often. A friend had asked me earlier if I thought the convention would stay at this hotel since it was very nice (though a little expensive), and given what Rick told me, I figured that they will have no trouble going back to the Wyndham. The convention attendees filled about 3/4 of the rooms if not more. I think the hotel was quite pleased.

I was free until the "Xeno-Archaeologists Road Show" panel at 7 PM that evening. I talked to a number of fans, many of whom I knew were going to be there like Dave Alway, John Filpus, Steve MacDonald, Jim Landis, Roxanne Meida, Greg Ketter and Lisa Freitag, Larry Smith and Sally Kobee, Bill Roper and Gretchen Van Dorn, Steve Scherer, and many others. In addition to the GoH Connie Willis, the other professional writers I saw and conversed with included Laurell K. Hamilton, Lois Tilton, Richard Knaak, Mary Frances Zambreno,

and K.D. Wentworth. I had books for some of the people to autograph, though I do wish I had known that K.D. was going to be there. I left my copy of her novel, *The Imperium Game* sitting at home.

Bill Higgins, Connie Willis and I were the Xeno-Archaeologists this year, a similar set-up as last year with Connie sitting in for Terry Pratchett. M. Lark Underwood once again did an excellent job of putting together strange artifacts for us to "interpret", and Connie was superb with her imaginative interpretations. (I mentioned to Lark that when I talked briefly with Terry Pratchett at Worldcon, he said he was impressed with her handling of the panel last year.) Lark also threw the panelists for a loop when our interpretations didn't match the "published" findings in *Xeno-Archaeologist Quarterly* which had come out in the previous year. That added to the fun of the panel.

There weren't many parties that night, but I just enjoyed conversations with a lot of different fans. I saw Imp (Carrie) and talked with her on and off through the con.

Saturday I purchased a few books in the huckster room, and went through the art show. I didn't have a panel until 3 PM, so I hung out talking with fans as before. I had a nice long conversation with Steve McDonald who was going to do a concert that evening. He was changing the strings on his 12-string guitar in the suite. We had a good time, and I was looking forward to his tape, *Song-spinner* which would be out for *Contraption* (he hoped) at the end of April.

I did bug many of the hucksters with one question: "Who wrote the Danny Dunn series?" Danny Dunn was a young teen who was good in science but managed to get into trouble. I recalled the titles, *Danny Dunn and The Homework Machine*, and *Danny Dunn and The Anti-Gravity Paint*, but not the author. Various book dealers and fans I asked--Greg Ketter, Alice Bently, Larry Smith, Roxanne Meida, Bill Roper, David Gorecki and more, could not come up with the author, and a few didn't recall the series. Finally, Glenn Cook said they were written by Jay Williams. Now all I need to do is find the books! (I thought I had a couple, but they aren't in my catalogue at home.)

The 3 PM panel was entitled "Is Fantasy Hazardous to Your Health?" I joined Lisa Freitag, Kim Hughes, and moderator P.C. Hodgell for a discussion of the effects of fantasy on fans and the people around them. Some of the comments became very revealing for the participants, in that some revealed their darkest fears--mine was losing memory, losing portions of my life that are very important to me. Alex Eisenstein was in the audience, and express surprise since I was a fan of Van Vogt's writ-

ing and several of his protagonists in his stories have memory loss.

In the two hours before my next panel I ran into Jill Smethells and we made arrangements to meet after the panel for dinner. I went to my room and retrieved the box of books that I had brought with me for that panel. "Secrets of my Past" dealt with the books which we read as kids and influenced us. I pulled several novels from my collection, books which I had read as a teen which turned me into a sf reader. I brought the box into the Green Room and opened it. Connie Willis and Michael Levin-Mansfield who were on the panel had a wonderful time looking at the books. They remembered most of them, even commenting that the copy of Heinlein's *Have Spacesuit--Will Travel* looked like the one they had checked out of the library when they were kids.

The panel itself went over very well, though it was sparsely attended (it was at 6PM and many people had gone to dinner). Connie mentioned a couple other books--non-SF--which had affected her, and Michael talked about the Heinlein novels which affected him. He read *Orphans of the Sky* when he was 5 years old and it scared him--the mutants were fine fodder for nightmares for a five-year-old. Then he read *Farmer in the Sky* which showed him that the poor soil on the Kentucky farm where he grew up could still produce some good crops. He was successful with natural fertilizers to the point of growing 12 pound tomatoes and 100 pound pumpkins. He was also intrigued by some learning and teaching techniques put forth in Heinlein's novels, and researched them even though his teachers at the time said they were nonsense. Right now he is writing software for teaching programs in math and science. And Michael is currently writing a set of programs to teach Soviet farmers the farming techniques he had learned from Heinlein.

Michael also mentioned his reverence for books which was deeply ingrained from an early age. He would save up his money and visit the corner drug store every couple of weeks and buy a new SF novel. When the price went up, he was despondent because he didn't have enough for the book he wanted. The owner of the store, knowing that Michael liked to read, told him that there was a way he could get the book for free. She grabbed the cover, tore it off, then handed the book to him. He was so horrified that she would do something like that to a book that he screamed, ran out of the store and didn't go back.

Dinner afterwards with Jill was very pleasant. We talked about various things that had happened to us since our last encounter over a year ago. She

heard about the house, and I heard about her life at school, her sister's wedding, and the house she would be buying in April. Afterwards we wandered around and talked some more.

I did attend the folk concert by Steve, and it was very good. His song about "Old B-Movies" is very funny, and his serious stuff is extremely good as well. After that, we talked a bit more in the atrium. He told me later that he sang in the atrium and filled it with some beautiful music. I was asleep then and so missed it. I did think, however, that Andrea would have been able to let her voice float through the atrium without any trouble, and any duet sung by those two would sound lovely. Maybe they will both be at **Capricon** next year.

Sunday morning I had breakfast in the hotel restaurant. After I had ordered and took out a book to read, I saw Connie Willis come in to have her breakfast. Long-time readers of LL know that I don't care that much for many of her writings, but I did want to get to know her better, since I had enjoyed being on so many panels with her at the con. I invited Connie to join me (since I was sitting alone), and the next hour and a half were absolutely delightful. She was pleased to note that I was the fan GoH at **Mid-Hi-Con** in October, and hoped that we could be on some panels together then.

The drive back home was uneventful. It was very nice to get home, see Maia, and sleep in my own bed.

## Ramblings 43.1

### School and Parties

While I was on my way to the convention, my classes worked on their papers in the library. As I suspected, some of the Calculus kids misbehaved and one was even kicked out of the library. I was not pleased, and told them that on Monday.

That Friday, February 18, was fathers' visiting day, and surprisingly (maybe not so) the kids in the Calculus class were much better behaved. I got some excellent comments from some of the dads--many thanking me for rekindling an interest in math in their sons and daughters.

That weekend was a long, four-day break and I started working in earnest on *Lan's Lantern*, hoping to have an issue done by **Millennicon** (of course I didn't make it). That Saturday Mark Bernstein and Sharon Brevort had a "Cabin-Fever" party and invited a lot of people over to their new home to break up the monotony of \*February\*. Lots of people were there whom I hadn't seen since **Confusion** or earlier. We stayed relatively late and had a good time.

On February 26 Tim Ryan hosted another of

his House Sings, and he had a good turnout. I got to talk to Andrea face-to-face instead of over the phone as we had been for the past several weeks. Her husband Jim, who was in MBA school at the time and would finish in May, was offered a job by Proctor & Gamble in Cincinnati. The probability of Jim accepting it was about 99 and 44/100%, so I would be losing the closeness of one of my best friends. Andrea doesn't write letters consistently, and phone bills were already too high, so she suggested that I get on one of the nets. I had to think seriously about that. Meanwhile, we would continue to talk and see each other when we can, and share rooms at conventions. We would also plan to meet at cons (and probably share rooms) even after she moved.

So, the House Sing was a lot of fun, and we heard some good music. Steve MacDonald and his wife Susan were there. I talked to Susan about her new job and how this was going to affect her and the family. She was excited since her teaching position is near Albion, and a new house-for-rent just opened up. She and Steve had been looking for someplace to rent or buy, but nothing--and they emphasized NOTHING, was available. Then this opened up, and they got it. Which is nice that they can move there so soon. Susan was pregnant and would be delivering in April.

And Andrea and I decided on a good date for **Summerfolk 94**--July 16. Even though she would be in Cincinnati by then (most assuredly), she still wanted to be part of the planning and execution of the event.

The weekend of March 4 was spent doing things around the house (like cleaning, cataloguing books, vacuuming, clearing out the gutters, etc.). I also found out that one of the students at school died on Sunday morning. She had gone home with the chicken pox earlier in the week, then her parents took her to the hospital as complications set in. School on Monday was rather grim.

The funeral was on Wednesday, and many of my students went to it. Most were responsible enough to work and plan for the test they would take on Thursday--some weren't. By the end of the school day on Thursday, I was really disgusted with the number of requests to postpone the test, and was almost outright rude to some kids. Anyway, I needed to write make-up tests for all my classes because of the absences.

During all this time school plugged on as usual. My Calculus class was still the most difficult one to prepare for, though the core group of kids who were willing to listen and learn made the class worthwhile. The group that had been a pain all year was having to get more serious about doing better--



college acceptances for some were riding on how well they did for third quarter. We would see what happened in the next few weeks.

I was not able to read very much since the beginning of the year--most of what I did was to prepare for the panels at **Capricorn**. But I did manage to finish *The Empire Builders* by Ben Bova, *King of the Grey* by Richard Knaak, and *The Imperium Game* by K.D. Wentworth whom I met at the convention and *The Jaguar Princess* by Clare Bell. This last was probably the most interesting, since I was learning a lot about Aztec culture.

Meanwhile I tried to get things done for *Lan's Lantern*, and think about what I needed to write for the chapbook for **Ad Astra**, the convention I was GoH for in June. What I thought of doing would entail more reading on my part, but that would be a pleasant chore. Besides, I did have a two-week Spring Break coming up for the last weeks of March.

On Friday, March 11, the sophomores left for Tennessee on the Wilderness Expedition. You may recall that last year we had the "Storm of the Century" which covered the area where the kids were hiking. A huge search was mounted in an effort to "save" the "lost" hikers. For the most part, everyone was fine--there was only one group which did not "come together" into a cohesive and cooperative unit, and that was the one which actually needed rescuing. This year, there were fewer groups, fewer sophomores going, and the staff was even better prepared. The only trouble was making sure that the news media stayed away from the kids while they were out hiking--especially when the students had their solo overnight!

I did manage to get to East Lansing to hear Andra sing at the Barnes & Noble bookstore on the 12th. I got midquarter comments done, and began receiving papers from some of the more organized students. Of course, the fact that they could earn extra credit by turning the paper in early may have had something to do with it. I had the work laid out for those students who left for Wilderness, and hoped that there would not be a repeat of what happened last year with the "Storm of the Century".

I was happy with the offering in my contract for next year. Although I didn't sign it and turn it in on the next day, I didn't wait until the deadline either (April 11). I actually forgot about picking it up on the day we were supposed to (March 15), but the next morning as I was making coffee for the faculty at 7:15, Arlyce asked if I had picked mine up yet. Since I answered negatively, she pulled it from the file and handed it to me. Getting a 7.5% increase was a lot more than I had expected.

During the last week before Spring Break, I

once again was disappointed in the performance of my Algebra IIB classes. As happened with some material before, people did very poorly on the test, so we spent more time on it, just as we would be spending more time on the same stuff after Spring Break.

## Dorsai Thing

On the weekend of March 18, when Spring Break started, Maia and I attended the **Dorsai Thing**. This was my first one. It was quite interesting and I got to see--again--some people I had not seen in a long while.

We arrived in the early evening, got our room and registered with the convention. The consuite had sandwich fixings, so we decided not to go out to eat. We didn't leave the hotel at all in fact. One of the nice features of this convention is that two breakfasts and a dinner are included with the rather steep price of the registration fee. However, when you balance everything else out, the average cost for that and the food in the consuite is much less, and it is a real bargain. (The only setback is that you have to arrive on time for the buffet-style breakfasts and dinner--given that many fans like to sleep late in the morning, it might not be a bargain if you miss a meal.)

For us it was a relaxacon. There was some programming, and a huckster room which was open for about three hours. There was a "McGyver Contest" in which groups took a box of items and

The Dorsai Irregulars, posing for pix!



constructed a catapult which was to launch a nerf ball as far as possible. And the "Nerf Olympics". I spent most of the time talking to people, massaging some backs, relaxing in the hot tub, reading, and attending the filks.

Friday night was a good one for filking. Some of the people presented a few of the new songs that they had written or practiced. Tom Smith did two. The first was one he wrote while at a filk convention in England. On Saturday morning of the con, a parachutist naked and painted green had landed on the roof of Buckingham Palace to impress the Queen. In his concert that evening Tom sang a parody of Stan Rogers' "Old Maui" commemorating this event: "Falling down upon the Queen, me boys/ Falling down upon the Queen./ There's a naked goof on the palace roof/Falling down upon the Queen." The reaction among the audience in England was amazement (as well as a lot of laughter, especially those who knew about the news item--apparently the British fans are like the Americans and not too many pay attention to outside events while at a con). They were amazed that he had a filksong so soon after the event. We in the States know that a whole afternoon is more than enough time for Tom Smith to write a parody.

His second one was to the Tune of "Honey", the Bobby Goldsboro song. The lyrics start out something like--"See the tree how big it's grown, my friends it hasn't been so long and it was good/ When Christopher gathered all his friends into the 100 acre wood..." And so on. (I won't ruin it for others who really should hear it straight from him.)

Moonwulf was there with some new material, and some old stuff that many of the Dorsai had not heard because not many attend conventions of ten. While talking to Wulf, I found out more about him and his work. He is fairly well-known in his neighborhood as a guitarist and songwriter. A nine-year-old girl asked him to play backup for one of his songs. She was in her fourth-grade talent show, and wanted him to play while she sang "Kitchen Junk Drawer".

"You want to sing 'Kitchen Junk Drawer'?" he asked her.

"No," she replied, "I wanted to sing 'Rhino-tellexomania', but my mother wouldn't let me."

Wulf said he had a great time backing her, and her mother played base too. Then he watched the rest of the show. There were several ballet pieces and piano solos, interpretive dances, and even a stand-up comic ("Five minutes of 'Knock-knock' jokes, if you can believe it!").

"The funniest was the kid who played the riff to 'Wild Thing' with his five-inch amp cranked all the way up and his hair flying--he really got into

it."

On Saturday night Judy Laub got a work-out while she tried to sign all the songs that were sung (she was doing that all weekend--signing what she was saying and what others replied--good practice for her). I missed her signing to "Rhino-tellexomania" but I heard gales of laughter coming from the room.

Conversations with Thea, Halina Harding, Chris Meredith, Tom and Tara Barber, Maggie and Jerry Lamb, and many many others rounded out the afternoons and evenings.

I did have a small attack of "fatherhood" while I was playing with Halina's daughter Kaelyn, but I got over it quickly. And Thea and I watched a number of young fans in the pool area while their parents went to the Dorsai business meeting. I realized how much the groups I am associated with are changing--families, kids, responsibilities. And Maia and I were the newest of the landed gentry!

I had a nice long talk with Gretchen Van Dorn and Bill Roper about electronic gear, taping filks and concerts, and various other topics. Within the next two months, Bill promises, there will be two new tapes out: Steve MacDonald's *Songspinner* and Tom Smith's tape, *Domino Death*.

Sunday's breakfast was very interesting because we sat with Wulf and Lea. Lea talked about her work with gene splicing and research on DNA. I knew she was intelligent, but listening to her gave me more respect of her abilities. I hope to talk further with her at other conventions.

We didn't stay too long in the afternoon. Both of us had things to do so we left fairly early.

## Ramblings 43.2

Monday I found out I had a cold--a wonderful way to begin Spring Break. I didn't take care of myself and thus spent most of the time with a sore throat and coughing. It knew I would be starting back at school with it.

I worked hard at trying to get pages done on the next *Lan's Lantern*, during the week. I found that I need to input a lot more material--I had less available on disk than I thought I had. By the time *Millennicon* rolled around the following weekend, I had 38 pages pasted up, and I brought a copy of those pages for everyone to see that, yes, I was working on the next issue.

## Millennicon

Andrea was to drive down with us, and she ar-

nived at our house about 1:30. We were on our way soon after, and got to the convention late for the 5 PM panel I was supposed to be on, but in plenty of time for the time-change in that panel: 8 PM. We quickly got into our room, and I moved the car from temporary parking to the parking garage, and walked into the hotel with assistant chairman Pat Stanley while carrying a box of fannzines. I put the zines out on the freebie table, and an hour later when I went by, they were all gone.

I was on four panels, including the one on Friday evening, "Fandom as a Support Group". Are fannish friends more sensitive and enlightened than our non-fannish friends? In many ways, the answer is yes, according to the panelists, and I have to agree. But we fans can be just as blind and insensitive as the mundanes in certain areas. Kit Matulich has had a very bad experience with her fan groups after the birth of her daughter. The child is in a wheel-chair and can only breathe through a tube in her neck. She says that most of her and her husband's fannish friends have excluded them from social activities because of this. I confessed that I had, for a long time, difficulty approaching anyone in a wheel-chair. It was only in fandom that I was able to overcome my prejudice and accept these handicapped fans as real fans. The only real conclusion is that in some cases fans are different, and in other they aren't.

Maia's niece J. Lea shared the room with us and Andrea, and she arrived while I was on the panel. Her father dropped her off. Lea had totalled her car while on Spring break--she survived the accident, but was upset about not having the car. Maia got her into the room, and I saw her on and off through the evening. Andrea got her guitar and went to the filk. She sang many of her songs, including her new ones. Larry Niven, the GoH, was present for a good deal of the filk.

My next panel was not until 9 in the evening on Saturday, so I just spent the day wandering around the huckster room, talking to fans, even attending some of the programming. I found out that Buck Coulson had had a heart attack the week before, but was allowed to come to the convention as long as he didn't lift anything. He looked to be in great shape in spite of the bruises on his arms (and elsewhere, so he said).

I attended the DUFF auction and walked away with two issues of *Amazing Stories*, one from 1929 and the other from 1930, for \$22. That makes them the oldest pulp magazine I have in my collection. I bid on a couple other items, but I was quickly outbid.

In the afternoon, Andrea had her first filk concert. She did very well, and throughout the day and



Tom Sadler in the background, with Andrea, Lea and Maia

evening people kept coming up to her and commenting on her lovely voice and songs. Her new song, "Moving" is very special and sensitive. It brought me to tears when she sang it at her concert.

Maureen O'Brien followed with a concert of her own, and Andrea and I stayed to listen to her. She sang mostly *a cappella*, but it was lovely. Her opening song was a blues number which came out perfectly--singing blues without accompaniment is not easy, but Maureen pulled it off and stayed on key. Her voice has improved a lot in the past couple of years.

For dinner, Tom Sadler and his family (wife Ruth, son George, Daughter Julia and grandson Robert) Andrea, Lea, Maia and I all went over to the Spaghetti Company and had a terrific meal. We had to wait about forty minutes (we should have called ahead for reservations--next year for sure), but it was worth it. The atmosphere was wonderful, and the conversation relaxed. I found out that Tom used to be in plays in high school. He was shy (and still claims to be), and when his friend in 10th grade went to audition for a part in the school play, Tom went along and tried out too. He enjoyed it so much that he went back for more, and by senior year he received the "Most Improved Actor" Award.

We got back in time for Maia's panel at 8 PM on "Villains". With Ann Cecil, Juanita Coulson, Rebecca Meluch and Ron Sarti (who arrived late) the group discussed the attraction of the villain in literature, and specifically in SF. My panel followed at 9: "Zine Fans vs Media Fans vs Book Fans". Ann Cecil stayed on, and with Jim Overmyer and Dick Spelman we talked about the various kinds of fans and the extreme habits and behaviors they can

sometimes exhibit. The deck was somewhat stacked since we all overlapped the other fannish divisions (with the exception maybe of Dick—but we like him anyway). It was a civilized discussion and no blood was shed.

Filking began after that, and I wandered in and out until I got tired and went to bed.

Sunday Maia and I got up for breakfast, and eventually wandered back to the room to gather our things together and pack the car. I had two panels in the afternoon. At Noon I reprised my role as a Xeno-Archaeologist along with Rebecca Meluch, Larry Niven, and Hal Clement. For Rebecca, everything was a religious object, for me most things were sex objects, for Hal, they were educational devices, and for Larry, they all needed further study so he needed to get/extend his grant money. We had a great time, with people really playing off each other by the end of the panel.

At 1 PM Buck Coulson, Mark Evans and Dick Spelman joined me on the panel to discuss what books should be part of the "Cultural Literacy of SF". Dick took control and asked some tough questions—like if we had only one book to take with us on a desert island, which one would it be? I suggested the complete Hall of Fame series. Buck suggested Healy & McComas' *Adventures in Time and Space*, I believe Mark suggested Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* (which was written as one book), and Dick suggested *Dune*. Many authors and titles were mentioned, and I saw people writing them down. Many people in the audience made suggestions as well, so it was a lively panel and we all had a good time.

As soon as we said our goodbyes to our friends, we headed out to the car and drove Lea back to Wright State University and her dorm. We met her parents Joy and Dale there, and helped carry her equipment and luggage up to the room. The new semester was beginning on Monday.

The drive home, with a stop at Pizza Hut for dinner, was fairly quiet. I drove, Maia and Andrea dozed. When we arrived, Andrea called her husband, had some coffee and a snack, then headed home to Haslett. We unpacked and headed for bed.

## Ramblings 43.3

We were both sick the next morning. Maia did go into work, and I into school so to paste up more pages on the *Lantern*. I did that through the week, trying to get a lot done, but not really advancing very much. Maintenance was doing electrical work in the part of the building where my classroom was, so I was without power for a couple of days.

Tuesday evening we went to see *The Last Days of Mr. Lincoln* at Meadow Brook Theatre. The first act was all right, but we were so ill and tired that we decided to forego the second act.

Wednesday Maia took her car in to get the cruise control fixed, and I took her to work—picked her up too. And the rest of the week we worked around the house and in the garden (beautiful weather), on our *Mishap*zines, and the articles we were to write for the chapbook for *Ad Astra*. We both got them done.

I must say though that we did go out to see *Thumbalina* and thoroughly enjoyed it. The songs were not as good as *The Little Mermaid*, or even *Aladdin* or *Beauty and the Beast*, but the animation was superb.

Although Maia had wanted to go to my parents' house for Easter dinner, she opted to stay home with her bronchitis. She didn't want to spread germs among the rest of the family. I had a good time, but did not stay too late. I wanted to get back to take care of Maia and get to bed a little early myself. I had an In-Service day on Monday.

The activities for the In-Service day involved the entire faculty from the three divisions (lower, middle and upper schools). It was a "workshop" on prejudice, and I learned more about the faculty than I did new things about prejudice. Although we were all teachers, very few wanted to get up in front of their colleagues and talk. I could see them somewhat reluctant to say anything about their personal feelings, but no one should have had any qualms standing in front of their colleagues and reporting what their group discussed. Since most people in my group were reluctant to say anything, I volunteered to be the spokesperson. Given the number of times I've been in front of crowds at conventions, I had no trouble talking to the faculty. But the majority of my colleagues remained silent.

We had four days of classes that week, and I gave quizzes in all of mine on Thursday. I did not assign much homework that weekend, since I knew that some of the kids had not even started writing their papers for me, and they were due Monday. Only three were turned in late. On Saturday, April 9, I drove up to Lansing to listen to Andrea sing at the Barnes & Noble Bookstore in Okemos. We went out to dinner afterwards, and she said she felt ready for *Filkontario* the following weekend where she would have a three song mini-concert.

The following week before the con was very hectic for me. I collected and read all the papers, graded them, and worked out grades for third quarter by Thursday morning. The end of third quarter was Wednesday, and the paper grade was part of the third quarter assessment. I also had to write

comments on all my students, so I wanted to have them finished before I left for the convention on Friday. I was mostly successful. I had them written and stored on computer disk by Friday afternoon, but I waited until Sunday evening, after I returned from the filking convention, to run them off and file them. The History department helped me a lot. They decided to take all the sophomores and run them through a Model United Nations session for the entire day. It turned out that I had to cancel two of my classes which were predominantly 10th graders. And this meant my 8th period class didn't meet, and therefore I could leave early.

## FilKONtario IV

I got home by 2:30 that Friday, and waited until Andrea came by. We left right away for the convention. Maia was still a little under the weather, and she didn't want to push herself so she opted not to go. The drive there was quite pleasant, but when we got there, we had trouble checking into the hotel--not that there was something wrong with the reservation, but we kept running into people we knew and stopped to talk.

We eventually made our way to the registration desk, then to our room, and finally down to the convention area to get our badges for the con. One of the surprise guests was Brenda Sutton, whose voice and talents were added to those of Kathy Mar, the main guest, Heather Rose Jones, the interfilk Guest, and all the other singers who attended. Bob Kanef-sky flew in from California, Kathleen Sloan from Denver, and Dave Clement from Winnipeg. There were lots of filkers from the States and Canada--some I never heard of before--but there was a lot of talent crammed into the filk rooms that weekend.



Bob Rintz and Dave Clement released their tape that weekend--but they only had 20 copies. The shipment arrived on time, but defective, so they went into the recording studio to run off 20 tapes for sale at the convention. I was one of the lucky twenty to purchase a tape. It is excellent! (I reviewed it last issue.)

Rand and Adam, a group from Buffalo, New York, also had a tape. It was different from most of the other filk tapes in that it was more rock and roll



Urban Tapestry and other filkers prepare for the evening jam session.

than filk or folk. It was definitely worth a listen to. Their first concert was a blow-out--that is, they used amplified equipment, and nearly lost their audience. After toning down, and later staying with acoustic guitars for the rest of the weekend, people heard how good they were.

Andrea's mini-concert went over very well. Later, Mary Ellen Wessels and Brenda Sutton worked up a harmony arrangement for "Magic Carpet", which they sang at the one-shots. It did not come out as well as they had rehearsed it, but it showed what potential the song had. Brenda smiled sweetly when I mentioned that at least she now had the music for it. And later Andrea confided that she finds it difficult to sing without at least hearing the descant created by MEW and Brenda in her mind.

At one point in the late evening, Andrea sang one of her latest songs, "Song of the Sea" (which has been renamed "Mer Song") for a group in the alternate filk room. Everyone listen to it intently, and gasped at then when the implications sunk in. It is based on the Carrie Richerson short story, "*Sous la Mer*" which appeared in the March 1993 issue of *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*. It is a chilling song, which captured the essence of the story.

There was a lot of excellent music and singing that weekend. Spencer Love who was recording the concerts and open filks, had a smile on his face the whole time. I cannot wait to hear the tapes that result from it. Other singers in attendance included: Bill Rintz, David Kushner, Mark Osher, Cliff and Carol Flynt, and many others. I spent time talking with Judith Hayman, Kathy Cogswell and Jan Di-Masi, and got to know them all a lot better.

On the way home, Andrea and I listened to both

of those tapes. The Urban Tapestry recording blew us away!

## Ramblings 43.4

Reality set in for several of my students as they got their grades and comments. Some seniors were brought up short when they found out exactly how badly they were doing. Some would work to correct the "error of their ways", but others would continue to fool around in class, not pay attention, and do worse. Some of the students in the Algebra IIB classes were not pleased with the D grades that achieved, and really buckled down to do better. Most would pull up their grades sufficiently to enter exam week with a better feeling about their abilities; others wouldn't.

I also worked on *Lan's Lantern* in hopes that I would have it done for **Contraption**. I wouldn't, but **Marcon** was two weeks later, and so I would aim for that.

The Grade Review meeting that week was rather interesting. The number of seniors in danger of not graduating was quite high. What could we do to insure that they would graduate? Nothing. It was up to them to pull it off. Surprisingly, the academic dean agreed.

## Off-Key CONTRAPTION

**Off Key Contraption** was the weekend of April 29. Things were pretty low-key for the con. The Pro GoH was Michael P. Kube-McDowell, and Fan GoH was Ann Cecil, and Joe Ellis was the Filk GoH. Lots of filkers showed up, including the other members of the Black Book Band to play with Mike K-Mac at a concert (this included Mike's wife Gwen Zak, Mary Ellen Wessels, and Barry and Sally Childs-Helton). Lynn Gold came in from California, and Judith and David Hayman

from Hamilton, Ontario.

Joe Ellis had some excellent music, including a new song based on the *Babylon 5* episode entitled, "The Sky Full of Stars". It has a haunting chorus which I find myself humming every once in a while, even though I have only heard it twice (once at this con, and once at **Marcon**.) There was a lot of jamming on Friday night, with Steve MacDonald and Tom Smith joining Joe, and other filkers like Renee Alper. Renee gave me a copy of her tape, *Wheel-chair in High Gear* for review (get it, it's good).

It rained the entire weekend, but I braved the elements to do things outside the hotel. Twice I went out with Maia and others for meals, and a third time I went to attend a piano recital for my niece Tanya, which was a short distance away, and I was able to sandwich it in between my convention obligations.

On Saturday evening, Judith and Dave Hayman had a party in their room for MEW and Andrea. For Mary Ellen is was a graduation celebration. She finally finished her degree, and people were happy for her. For Andrea it was a going-away/ moving party. Indeed, Jim had accepted the position at Proctor and Gamble, so in June they would be moving to Cincinnati.

## Ramblings 43.5

On Friday of the following weekend I attended a Math seminar on the use of the Texas Instrument TI-82 graphics calculator. This was a special program through the Oakland County Schools, and the participants were entitled to a free calculator. Naturally I jumped at the chance, and learned a few things about the calculator that I would be using the following fall in the Calculus (and other) class. Since I could not just cancel classes, I arranged for my weekly tests to be given on that Friday, which meant I spent the weekend grading them.

Mary Ellen Wessels and Andrea relaxing at their party in the Hayman's room at **Contraption**.



On Saturday morning I proctored the SAT ex-

ams, and afterwards drove with Maia to the Lansing



area to attend a graduation gathering for Andrea's husband Jim. The party was at her parents' house, a lovely place in the country surrounding the state capital. Jim's sister-in-law was up from Nashville to join in celebrating his release from MBA school. I had a good time there, especially meeting (finally) Andrea's family.

From there we drove to Plymouth to join another of MEW's graduation parties--this time at her mother's house. Andrea and Jim had considered going, but they were down to one car.; something happened to Andrea's Ford Escort, and it was undrivable for several days. There were a lot of filkers at MEW's party, including, once again, the Haymans. We stayed later than we should have, considering that we had an obligation on Sunday afternoon.

We slept in the next morning, then drove to my parents' place to celebrate Mother's Day. It was a very fine day, and we had a pleasant afternoon. However, we left early, since I had to finish grading tests, and also had to write mid-quarter comments on about 30 students (roughly 40% of the students I had for the year).

During the following week I met with some parents who had come in to see why their sons were not doing as well as they should in my Calculus class. To my surprise, I didn't get the usual comment, "We aren't paying so much money to see our son fail your class" that other teachers have gotten in the past. They understood exactly what was happening, and were allowing their sons to fail if that was going to be their choice (i.e., not work to bring up their grades). I had the support of the administration and the academic deans (that surprised me more--given the White Knight attitude they have exhibited in the past). I always had the support of my department chairman.

And I managed to finish *Lan's Lantern* #42, and had printed 120 copies to take with me to **Marcon** the following weekend.

## MARCON 29

I had a very good time at **Marcon** (May 13-15). I passed out copies of the *Lantern* and came home with 10 out of the 120. People were looking forward to the filk reviews, and the criticisms I had of the various tapes were seconded by the filkers themselves. Dr. Jane Robinson was thrilled that I reviewed *Midlife Crisis*, and Renee Alper was absolutely glowing with pride at the good review I gave her tape. She agreed with its shortcomings, and was pleased with the praise.

Except for the specific program items I had

been scheduled into, I pretty much stayed in the filk track of programming. I enjoyed hearing the beautiful music that my friends made, and was pleased with Andrea's first hour-long filk concert. She had put together her own songbook with lyrics and chords to some of her best songs. The melody lines would have to wait for the next version.

I commissioned two t-shirts from Ray and Barbara van Tilberg. Both were "The Maple Leaf... Wherever", one for Maia and one for myself. It pictured a nebula in a maple-leaf, and I designed it to be a companion shirt to "The Stars and Stripes... Wherever" shirt sold by Tom Barber. We got some good reactions to it, included someone who wanted another one made for a friend. I told Barbara and Ray they could use it for whomever else wanted one.

Two new tapes were released from Dodeka Records that weekend: Tom Smith's *Domino Death* and Steve MacDonald's *SongSpinner* (both reviewed this issue). Both tapes were eagerly awaited by the filk fans, and I suppose it would not have mattered if the quality of either was not that good. Both singers have a loyal following, and whatever they put out would be an instant "Big Seller". Fortunately, both tapes ARE good.

We stayed late enough on Sunday afternoon so we could celebrate a wedding--Sally and Barry Childs-Helton renewed their vows on their 10th anniversary in the presence of their fannish friends. It was a pleasant ceremony, and rather much of a surprise, since I thought they had been married much longer.



Barry and Sally Childs-Helton renew their wedding vows.

## Ramblings 43.6

School and work, work and school. That occupied my time for the next two weeks. I managed to get seeds and seedlings planted in the two gardens. The one at the house was wonderful



to work with. I expanded its borders a little, and found the soil, as I turned it over, to be very rich, though not very deep. It would get better as I mulched it and took care of it over the next few years.

The garden at Cranbrook, would I would keep for only two more summers, was more trouble to take care of. Since I didn't live on campus, working in it was problematical, and keeping the new dogs and animals on campus out of the garden was a lot of trouble. There was also the fact that some of the newer people didn't know how to community garden--they dragged their hoses through mine to get to theirs, and piled their weed on my composting pile. Normally I would not mind, but the one they chose to heap the weeds on was the one I wanted to take apart and use as fertilizer for other parts of my plant beds. In the long run it would make for a very stressful summer.

I also managed to clean up the basement well enough for an open house and housewarming party for our friends on May 21. Lots of people showed up, mostly fans, and we had a good time. People stayed late into the evening, and at one point Diana Stein and I saw a spectacular meteor event. We watched one streak down, then split in two.

People were impressed with the library (which I really need to get finished soon), and I overheard some say that it is inspiring them to get some shelves for their own books. Ross and Ann Anderson were among the first to arrive and the last to leave. I found out that Ross loved old movie serials, and so I showed him my collection. He ended up borrowing *The Adventures of Captain Marvel*.

The party was a lot of fun, but I prefer to go to parties at other peoples' houses. I took us a while to clean up after ours.

## MIKE-CON

We did finally have a weekend away in a hotel to visit friends without actually going to a convention. Mike Glicksohn and Mike Harper throw themselves a birthday party every year and invite their friends over--on the American Memorial Weekend, so their friends from the US don't have to rush to get home by the next day. They have gatherings on Friday and Saturday night, and a big picnic on Sunday afternoon. Of course, Maia and I attended all of it.

On Saturday afternoon, we went to the Royal Ontario Museum and spent about four hours looking at the exhibits. They had on display a collection of Chinese artifacts, some of the most exquisite examples of the "joined color" style that I have ever

seen. One bowl in particular caught my fancy. It was white porcelain with a red glaze on the outside, decorated with flowers. There were no replicas of it in the gift shop and the pictures of it did not do it justice.

From there we walked to Chinatown, and had dinner at the Shanghai restaurant, the one we usually eat at when we go. The afternoon was so invigorating that we both finished everything we ordered.

I had some wonderful talks with the people at the various parties. Halina Harding and I talked about the times we were together at Cranbrook. Bruce Schnaier and I converse science and math a bit. I had copies of *Lan's Lantern* to hand out, and asked Mike to mail the Canadian ones through his post office (and gave him the money for it). I asked Lloyd Penney about programming for *Ad Astra* which was coming up in three weeks. Since we had not heard anything from our liaisons, we were a bit concerned about what would be happening at the convention. Lloyd was too, and promised to look into it.

Sunday morning we helped cook breakfast as Susan made poached eggs topped with Dave Yoder's home-made Hollandaise sauce. After cleaning dishes and the kitchen, we all helped to get things ready for the picnic. As usual, Dave and I prepared the grills and cooked the burgers, hot dogs, chicken and garlic. We fed a lot of people and, of course, did not neglect feeding ourselves. The night wound down as did the conversations, and eventually Maia and I went back to the Lakeside Inn for our final night in Toronto in May.

## Ramblings 43.7

The three days after Memorial Day were review for exams. I took it easy, let my students asked questions from the various review packets I handed out (except the seniors and the Calculus class--I figured that they were going to College in the fall, and this is what it would be like there, so they better get used to it). I made sure all my exams were ready to go and tried to relax until the push for grading exams and final comments came up.

Friday I caught up on doing some things around the house, did some shopping and made barbequed lemon chicken for dinner. I was up early on Saturday morning to proctor SAT exams again. I usually get up early anyway, and the job does pay well (more per hour than teaching!) In the afternoon Maia and I drove to Lansing to attend Andrea's final concert at the Okemos Barnes & Noble Bookstore before she moved to Cincinnati. She and Steve MacDonald shared a two hour slot, and it was

nice to hear them sing together and separately. Jim, Andrea's husband, showed up along with their friend John McCabe, who also plays guitar and sings. Once again we all went out to dinner afterwards, and had a somber farewell. I would not see Andrea again until she came to stay for **Summer-filk**.

I managed to get through exams and grading without too much stress on my part. I attended the Awards Ceremony on Thursday night (June 9), mostly to see if someone deserving received the Excellence in Teaching Award. I don't remember who got it, which might tell you something.

I was supposed to attend one of the two graduation ceremonies on Friday, but Maia and I had other plans. We drove to Columbus Ohio to celebrate her sister Joy's graduation from college. Finally, after passing the age of 40, raising four kids (one's still in high school), and becoming a grandmother, Joy earned her BA degree in History and teaching. The party she had was a lot of fun.

We returned from the pleasant weekend in time to get plenty of sleep, and for Maia to go to work on Monday, and me to attend the meetings schedule for wrapping up the year. I spent time in the garden when I could, and did a little preparation for my stint as Fan GoH at **Ad Astra**. We had gotten a call from our Liaison's about programming, and we were ready to arrive Thursday evening and meet with the committee.

## AD ASTRA 14

**Ad Astra** was a very strange convention for us. We were listed as the Fan Guests of Honor, but we did not exactly receive the treatment we were used to as such Guests. It did boil down to a lack of communication on several levels.

When we checked into the hotel, the desk had a reservation for us, but not as being picked up by the convention. Maia left her credit card imprint, and when we saw Lloyd Penney, we explained what happened, and he took care of it immediately. In the evening at the pre-convention preparations, we helped collate and staple the program books, and stuff bags with materials and freebies for the attendees. Maia discovered that there were no biograph-

posed to have had with the con committee was not sufficiently maintained. At one point, the programming director sought me out and showed me a pre-con list of programming items, and asked if we had received them. I had to answer negatively.

There were two other major glitches, but I won't get into those. But in spite of these difficulties, we did have a good time, and tried our best to entertain people who attended our panels, and we were congenial to everyone on the committee, the attendees, and our co-GoHs.

L. Sprague and Catherine Crook de Camp were wonderfully charming. At the dinner on Saturday evening we heard a bit about Sprague's trip to Easter Island, while Catherine stayed home and worked on the tax returns. Peter Morwood and Diane Duane were lovely people, and their stories about living in Ireland were hilarious. And we met lots of other people who were kind and interesting.

Friday morning we drove to the Ontario Science Museum to tour the exhibits and play with the hands-on displays. We had been there several years ago, and had fun then. We enjoyed ourselves once more and returned in the afternoon ready for the convention. We found the Green Room, run very efficiently by Jeanne Michaud and Teri Gardner and their crew, and spent time there throughout the convention.

At opening ceremonies we wore the Hawaiian shirts made for us by Yvonne Penney, and nearly fell on the floor in giggles when the treasurer Ray Alexander walked in wearing a complete outfit made from the colorful material of our Hawaiian shirts. We were presented with a book about China from the Royal Ontario Museum, which we proudly added to our library when we got home.

I did enjoy the panels I was on--"Ferençs R Us" and "How to Publish a Fanzine". The panels I attended were interesting, especially the "Fannish Widow/Widower" which Maia was on, and "Filk-ing: The Past through Today." One of our other required activities was to attend the Saturday Brunch and make a few remarks. Maia and I told several fannish stories, including my Not Winning the Hugo from **Magicon**. At the "Hour with Lan and Maia" we had very few people attending, so we just had an informal chat, which included Mike Glicksohn, Susan Manchester, and Murray Moore.

Howard Scrimgeur, Judith Hayman, Catherine MacDonald and John Hall on the filk panel.



ies for us in the program book. There were other little things, but basically the contact we were sup-

I spent the evenings in the filk room, listening to Urban Tapestry, Rand and Adam, Freddy, John

Hall and Grant Millard, David Kushner, Glen Simser, Catherine MacDonald, Judith Hayman, and many others. And back in the Green Room, Maia and I had some great conversations with a lot of people.

Eventually it was time to leave, and we had a swift trip across Canada to Sarnia where, 10 kilometers before the Bluewater Bridge, I got caught in a speed trap and got a ticket for speeding. I drove much more carefully from then on home.

## Ramblings 43.8

On Thursday and Friday, June 16 and 17, I had the meetings for the Horizons-Upward Bound (HUB) program. Once Again I was going to teach summer classes. This time I would have the use of the Texas Instruments TI-82 graphing calculator. The program had ordered enough for one class, so I would teach the precalculus and calculus kids how to use them, but the calculators would not leave the classroom.

I got home early enough on Friday to meet Lynn Margosian when she arrived. I had not seen her in quite a while, so it was very nice to have her come in for a visit. The bad part about her visit was that it rained most of the weekend. She insisted on me making sure that there would be work for her to do in helping around the house. I did have some things planned, but any of the outdoor work had to wait until Sunday when the weather broke.

On Saturday we went to the Detroit Institute of Art for two Indian exhibits: one Native American costume and beadwork, the other East Indian paintings and book manuscript illuminations. We had a wonderful time seeing both exhibits (one ending and the other beginning). In the evening we went to the show to see *The Lion King*. Yes, we enjoyed that too.



Sunday was mostly cloudy, but it had stopped raining, and the sun did poke through occasionally.

I extended the garden somewhat by digging up the grass; Lynn took the sod and put some against the house in the back so to have the water flow away from the foundation. The sod that was left over went to fill in the section by the front curb. In the evening, we watched TV, talked and snacked. Lynn told me about her travels plans, where she was going from our house--up toward the upper peninsula of Michigan, stopping to see a few sites along the way and stay at some parks. By the end of the week she would be back at home in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Monday morning I left before Lynn did, though she did get up to say goodbye. HUB classes started and I threw myself into the coursework for the first week. I was teaching four different classes; in addition to precalculus and calculus, I also had Algebra I and II. Most of the kids were motivated to work, though I did have some trouble with a few seniors.

That Friday I had someone cover my last class so I could leave with Maia for **Inconjunction**.

## INCONJUNCTION

We made good time driving there, and got checked into the room without trouble. We registered for the convention and then wandered around meeting friends and looking at books in the huckster room. I had fun handing out copies of LL #42. My panels went well, and Andrea, as usual, was a superb roommate.

Several things stand out for me from this convention. Bill Rintz joined Andrea, Mike Longcor, Juanita Coulson and Renee Alper on stage for a "Round Robin Filk" on Saturday afternoon. Most filkers thin of Bill as someone who accompanies others with his guitar or fiddle, whereas he has a pleasant singing voice, lots of tunes to share, and deserves to be heard more often. That this filk was held in the afternoon was a plus; it gave more fans a

The Afternoon Filk Round Robin with Renee Alper, Juanita Coulson, Bill Rintz, Andrea Yeomans, and Mike "Moonwolf" Longcor.

chance to hear some good music.

Bob Sabella and his family were at the conven-

tion. Together with Tom Sadler and his family and David Rowe, we all went out to dinner at a nice Italian restaurant. I got to meet Bob's wife Jean, and both boys, Mark and Andy. And they got to meet Andrea, of whom they have heard many things in these pages. The later conversations with Bob and Tom were great. And I managed to introduce Bob to fellow *Mishapper* Naomi Pardue.

I met Pamela Service, a YA writer whose books are quite good. I was on a panel with her, and she was delightful. I was also on a couple of panels with Jack Nimersheim, who is never at a loss for something to say--and most of the time he knows what he's talking about! ☺

The only downside of the con was that we shared the hotel with some sports car enthusiasts, whose manners toward the fannish women were appalling. There was also a problem with them taking up handicapped parking places with their classic sports cars. Most fans tried to be tolerant, but there were times when tempers flared. It didn't help that a fan had left a note on one of the covered cars which said: "Nice car. Pity if something should happen to it. A concerned Klingon". I do not know if the note was genuine, or if the rumors of the sports car enthusiasts' ill-manner behavior were all true, but parking laws were indeed broken. I don't know exactly what happened in the end, except that I am leery of returning to the con next year if the same group is there.

## Ramblings 43.9

I returned to teach classes for two weeks before the next convention. I also tried to work two gardens, and occasionally make contact with my cousin Kathy who was going through a divorce. She would sometimes come out to work in the Cranbrook garden with me, for which help she was welcome to take any vegetables she wanted. Once in a while her daughter Tanya would show up too.

The combination of everything I was trying to do during the summer, all I've mentioned plus read, cook, put up vegetables, and do the usual work needed around the house, did wear on me a lot. I was difficult to live with for the second week as I cooked some chicken in advance, and made preparations for an all-day party on Saturday, July 16.

## SUMMERFILK

Since Andrea had moved to Cincinnati, and Maia was still not fully up to speed, most of the preparations for *Summerfilk* fell to me. I made sure that the cabin was clean, stocked with what we needed, had food prepared, and dragged the microwave from my classroom to the cabin for quick cooking and reheating of food.

Andrea came up on Friday and had everything she needed done finished for making pesto except



Above: Steve Macdonald, Andrea, John Filpus

Below: Chris Dailey, Maia, Susan Macdonald and others



cooking the pasta. She did that on Saturday. In the evening we caught up on our lives--not too much was new since we had been keeping in touch by phone.

I got out to the cabin early, posted signs, and set up what I could before the rest of the people arrived. I was concerned about parking and the distance over bumpy ground people would have to carry things, but I managed to unlock the chain to the athletic field road which allowed people to park

closer to the cabin. I did get in trouble for that, though; the administrators of the grounds were trying to keep people off that area. I was also worried that we wouldn't have enough food, refreshments, and snacks.

Of course, I worried for nothing. Things went smoothly. I did miss Allen Bernstein's help in barbecuing the rest of the chicken, as he had last year. Lots of people showed up: Tom Sadler, Chris and Pat Beck, Dave Alway, John Filpus, Tim Ryan, Steve and Susan MacDonald and their kids Luke, Renée and the new baby Joshua, Michele Kennedy, Tom and Tara Barber, Sue McClean, Chris Daily, Mag-gie Rhode, Ruthann Zaroff and Judith and Dave Hayman. Andy Eigel and a group from Ohio also showed up, and I've probably forgotten some others. We had lots of fun.

Luke looked a little out of sorts, and while talking to him, I asked if he liked raspberries. Since he did, we walked over to my garden and picked a bunch to eat, and for him to take home. Once again, I blew my reputation for not liking little kids!

Things broke up about midnight. People had been leaving in trickles, but we needed to get the cabin cleaned up and everything out before we left. I didn't have the luxury of returning the next morning to clean--and another group was to use the cabin on Sunday.

The next morning Judith and Dave came by for breakfast before leaving to return to Hamilton. They needed some time to relax before the convention they were helping to run the following weekend: **Toronto Trek**. And **Summerfolk** filled the bill. Andrea took off for Lansing to spend a couple of days with her parents, and we went to another party for Maia's group at work. This annual event at Bob and Suzanne Sims' place was another nice break for me, and a nice way to unwind before tackling another week at school. Then I was glad to be able to get away for the convention in Pittsburgh.

## CONFLUENCE

Diana Harlan Stein had called us about maybe driving to the convention together. Her husband David was working at the Star Trek convention in Toronto, and she wanted to go to **Confluence** instead, but didn't want to drive alone. Since she had to work on that Friday and couldn't leave earlier, neither of us had to take time off from our jobs. When everyone was assembled at our place, we took off for Pittsburgh.

The ride was very pleasant. Dave Jordan tried to sleep, and the conversation ranged all over from one topic to another. One of the strangest things I was a

car I had seen last year in Ohio on my way home from the convention we were heading towards. I remember the car distinctly because its license plate number was "09SVDB". The car obviously belonged to a coin collector, and it was so unusual that it was lodged in permanent memory. The other people in Diana's van though I was strange, but they knew that already.

We arrived without any mishaps, and proceeded to enjoy the convention. One of several highlights of the con was Julia Ecklar taking us over to see Rusty Westbeld at their house. There were massive changes in the gardens since I was there last year. Rusty had expanded it greatly, had gotten a lot of free mulch from the suburb city of Irwin (all the leaves and grass collected from the residents and parks and city building lawns were in a separate area and free to anyone who wanted to haul it away). Since there was absolutely no construction going on in Pittsburgh, Rusty was out of a job. So she decided to try using her talents as a gardener and sell produce. So far, it seemed to be working. And I really envied the enormous space she had, and how intensively she was using it. Julia had also gotten a new dog to replace hers that had died earlier. This one was a border collie, and did amazing things. He tried herding the cats, and even herded the group of us as we stood talking in the back yard.

I enjoyed talking with Lynn McMillen who has written some reviews for the *Lantern*. She was enjoying her second **Confluence**, and seemed much more relaxed than the year before. Hal Drake and I were on another panel about A.E. Van Vogt (the first was at **Confusion** in January of 1994); he couldn't stay long so we didn't get a chance to talk afterwards. Other brief conversations with Kara Dalky, John Barnes, Jim Emerson Nancy Springer, Joe Clifford Faust and his wife, and several people in the Huckster Room and con suite made for enjoyable afternoon and evenings. I even attended an "@!" party, even though I was not yet on the nets. There were several interesting people there, including John DeChancie and his friends Jo and others from New Orleans.

We attended a nice buffet dinner for all the guests, which was delicious. **Confluence** doesn't have a "Guest of Honor", but lots of "guests" who are treated to a buffet. This makes all the program participants feel special and appreciated, and a very pleasant convention to attend.

Once again I had loaned some videotapes for the film program, and managed to rescue them before we left on Sunday.

## Ramblings 43.10

Ever since we moved into the house, Maia's sister Joy wanted to come visit. Things didn't quite work out on a couple of the occasions, but finally at the end of July she and her daughter Denice drove up to visit. They would only be with us for a couple of days, but they were determined to see the place and have a good time.

They arrived on a Thursday evening. I stayed late at school that night—it was Career Night. Originally there was a student teacher assigned to host the speaker with me, but one of the other teachers didn't show up, so I was reassigned to one of his speaker (a price of being competent, I guess). This meant that I had to stay until the end, and not get away early as my original partner and I had planned. (We were going to split the duty—I'd take the first session, he would take the second.) I finally got home about 10 PM and actually was feeling pretty good. It was nice to see Joy's ever-smiling face, and talk with Denice, who was still recovering from back surgery (to correct scoliosis). She was taller than I had seen her the month before; the corrective surgery made her an inch and a half taller.

I had gotten in the mail that day a box from Critic's Choice Video, and in it was one of the surprise gifts I had ordered for Maia. A copy of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* starring Diana Rigg. She remembered seeing it the first and only time it had been broadcasted, and tried to find it shortly after we got our VCR. The search was unsuccessful, but two weeks earlier I had seen it in the catalogue, and ordered it. Since that Thursday (July 28) was her birthday, it made a wonderful and fitting present. She was overwhelmed by it.

On Friday after I got home, we piled into my car and drove to my parents house to celebrate Maia's birthday. Mom and Dad like to entertain, so they had a nice dinner for us. On the drive there, Joy had asked, "Do you think they would let me drive the pontoon boat?" We didn't think that would be a problem. We were right; after dinner Dad put Joy in the Captain's chair and let her drive the boat around Lake Tyrone. She had never driven a boat before, and she was delighted to do so. We didn't stay too late since both Maia and Denice were getting tired.

Joy and Denice left on Saturday afternoon. I worked around the house and catalogued the backlog of books and magazines that had become and unstable pile on the table with the cataloguing computer. Maia's friend Ruthann had bought tickets for them to go to a dinner concert—it was her birthday gift to Maia, so I stayed home and worked.



Captain Joy Bishop, steering the pontoon boat.

The following week was even more hectic at school. The program was winding up, and I mean "up". Theme Day was on Saturday, and there were lots of things to do to get ready for the parents who would be visiting. I usually try to take a casual attitude toward this, but the kids were more agitated than usual, and I was a bit peeved too, since the computer in my classroom where I did all my work for school was not working properly. Eventually, Rich Lamb, the head of the Cranbrook Kingswood Computer Science Department, replaced it, and transferred all the programs onto the new machine. Thus I was able to write up "Half Sheets" on all my students for the summer program.

On Sunday were the final meetings and I cannot honestly remember if I stayed for the last dinner together or not. But I was glad to have ended one of the major time-sinks of the summer. But I didn't complain too much; the extra money was nice to have.

The next few days were spent getting ready for our trip to England. Clothes were washed and packed, money was exchanged in advance for British pounds, arrangements were made for the mail and newspapers to be picked up by our friend Russ Herschler who lived 5 doors away. I arranged with Kathy to take care of the Cranbrook garden; the one at the house was picked over enough that nothing would spoil too badly during the eight days we would be away.



# ENGLAND: 1994

## Lan & Maia's trip to the British Isles

On Friday evening, August 12, Maia came home early from work and finished her packing. I had put the finishing(!) touches on my garden, and left it in the care of my cousin Kathy while we would be gone. She promised to water it, and pick whatever produce she wanted. As soon as Maia's co-worker, Ruthann, arrived, we had dinner, and Ruthann drove us to the airport. Soon we were on a Delta flight for England and 8 days of fun.

This was a trip not connected with fandom at all. We had some money left over from the sale of the comic books which we did not use for the house, and I had made extra money from the summer teaching, so we decided to treat ourselves to this trip. One other determining factor was seeing *The Remains of the Day* starring Emma Thompson and Anthony Hopkins, and the scenery of the English countryside evoked the memories of past visits, awoke the desire to see this country again. We were looking forward to it.

We arrived at Gatwick Airport around 10, and got through customs without any trouble. The Gatwick Express took us to Victoria Station quickly where we turned in our vouchers for the week-long pass for the Underground. Via the "tube" we arrived at Paddington Station, and walked a familiar route to our hotel. We had stayed in that area the first time we went to England back in 1987. After a half-hour wait, we settled our bags in the room, took a short nap, and headed out toward Hyde Park and Westminster Abbey. It was amazing how quickly my sense of direction for London came back.

Along the way we noticed a number of vans filled with Bobbies. I thought that maybe the Queen or other high government official was going to be touring, but I was wrong. Just as we got to the corner where Buckingham Palace was situated, between Hyde Park and St. James Park, we heard and saw protesters: "Get British troops out of Ireland!". We saw which way they were going, and went the other way, into St. James Park (not before I snapped a picture of them), and had a nice pleasant walk through to Green Park and eventually arrived at Westminster Abbey.

The first time we tried to see WA (1987), we arrived in time to see it being closed up. The second time (1990), we had about an hour before it closed, not enough time to see the main part of the church,

so we went through the cloisters. For this visit we had plenty of time and interest to see many of the various monuments, altars, windows and exhibits. However, we did get out too late to purchase anything in the gift shop (it was closed), but we stopped later in the trip to do that. Photography was much permitted in the Abbey at all, so we wanted some postcards for our photo album.

We stopped to admire the Jewel Tower again, which was swathed in plastic and scaffolding, apparently under reconstruction, and made our way to the tube station where we took the underground back to Paddington. Dinner was at Garfunkel's (something like Denny's, but with a bar), and had a French beer (Artois) with the meal. By then we were more than ready to turn in; we had not slept much on the flight over and the nap wasn't long enough, so we were very tired.

## Sunday: Kew Palace and Gardens

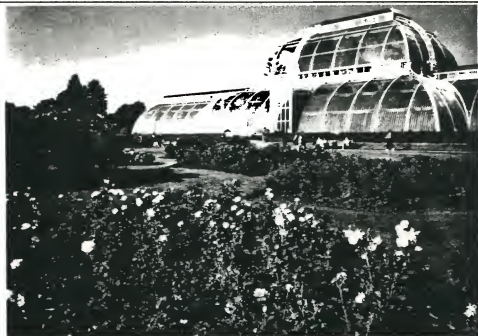
Sunday we took the underground to Kew Palace, which was one of the out-of-London residences of Queen Charlotte in the late 1700s, and the botanical gardens on the grounds. It was fantastic. The formal gardens were lovely, and the various greenhouses had plants from tropical to arid environments. We mostly walked around, took pictures, and enjoyed ourselves. The palace was lovely, and Maia enjoyed the rooms of old furniture, furnishings, wall hangings, and decorations.

Since we expressed some interest in the Chinese artifacts, one of the guards told us about a rare Ming vase of brown porcelain which was in one of the cases. He took us to the room (apparently outside his guard position for the day, but he wanted to be helpful), and showed us the piece. It was lovely--what we could see of it. It was locked inside and partially hidden. "The vase is priceless," he said. "There is no way you could replace something as rare as that." We found that the guards were quite helpful here and other places. They knew a lot about what they were guarding, so it was to our benefit to ask.

Probably the most significant discovery for us was the Marianne North Gallery. Marianne North



One of the many greenhouses of Kew Botanical Gardens. This is the Palm House.



was a painter and world traveler. The gallery which was located on the grounds had all 832 of her paintings, which depicted flowers and scenes from her travels. We entered the place not knowing the explosion of color we would encounter. There were two hardcover books about her work for sale. One was about her and her work, the other an edited version of her travelogues. Both had lots of her paintings pictured. I asked how many of them were repeated, and the saleslady said that the editors tried not to repeat them. I was delighted to hear that--because I wanted as many of them as I could get. I bought both books (and shot that day's budget, but it was worth it!).

That evening we ate at the Peking Chinese restaurant. I had Tsing Tao beer with my very delicious dinner.

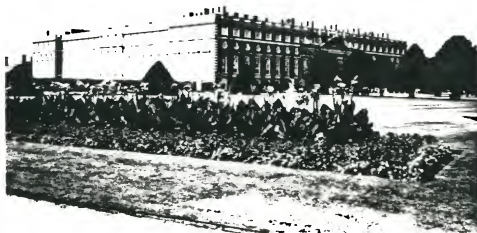
### Monday: Hampton Court Palace and a Play

Hampton Court Palace was built by Cardinal Wolsey, and was more elaborate and plush than any resident King Henry VIII had at the time. In an effort to stay on Henry's good side (and thus save his own life), Wolsey gave the palace to Henry--to no avail. He wasn't executed exactly, but died on



Hampton Court Palace, the main entrance. Note that there is no water in the moat.

Hampton Court Palace  
and gardens, from the  
northwest



the trip to the Tower of London--on his way to be executed.

This palace was far more elaborate than Kew Palace. It had a varied number of rooms and halls, and one of the most prominent features boasted in the literature was that of the complete kitchens which were used to feed hundreds of people every day. The kitchens were the only place inside the palace where we were given free reign to take pictures--and we took advantage of it.

Outside were huge elaborate gardens, walkways, a maze and water-lily-covered ponds and canals. One section of the gardens was being restored, and a friendly guard gave us a little history about it. She said that from paintings and archaeological digs they were able to approximate what that section of gardens looked like, what was grown, and were working on restoring it as accurately as possible. Her husband worked at Kew Gardens (nothing like keeping similar jobs in the family!).

We returned early to stop at our room and refresh ourselves before going to the theatre district for dinner and a show. We found a delightful corner place called Salieri's which played classical opera and was decorated with an operatic motif. The food was east Mediterranean, and I had a Turkish beer with the meal, Elef Pilsener.

We had very little trouble walking up the street to the Adelphi Theatre for the evening performance of *Sunset Boulevard*, starring Betty Buckley as Norma Desmond and John Barrowman as Joe Gillis. This Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is an adaptation of the Billy Wilder film, and follows the story very closely. The music and songs are excellent, and in many cases better than *Phantom of the Opera*. There were four songs which I considered "show-stoppers", though two others were good enough to be show-stoppers as well. We were very pleased with the production, and we picked up the tape at intermission.

## Tuesday: Lullingstone Roman Villa and Eynsford Castle

The next morning we took the tube to Victoria Station and called Joan Temple to set up a visit with her in Folkestone on Thursday. We missed the train for Lewes because they had changed the departure time without making it clear to us. We arrived on the platform just as the train pulled out. After a brief discussion between ourselves and consultation with one of the helpful train personnel, we boarded the train to Swanley where we switched to go to Eynsford and Lullingstone Castle. Much to our dismay, the Castle was closed during the week, only open on weekends.

In the same area, however, was an excavated Roman Villa, which was superb. Since my Masters Degree is in Latin, I was definitely interested in things Roman, even if they were in Britain--but then it gave me a chance to combine my interests. The taped guided tour was very helpful, and photography was encouraged. The Romans were obsessed with being clean so a disproportionate area of the villa was devoted to the baths. And since they also enjoyed eating, the dining area was heavily decorated. The floor mosaic was spectacular. There was also a Christian shrine, indicating that the owners had at some point converted.

After the tour we walked into Eynsford. It was fairly easy to avoid being run over by the cars whizzing past on the narrow road-- since they were few and far between, it noise of the engines seemed rather loud in the "nature sounds" we heard. The fields were mostly meadows and we saw sheep and, surprisingly, cows. As soon as we passed under the railroad trestle, which looked more like a Roman aqueduct, we turned up a drive and found ourselves at a water-pumping station. One of the civil engineers came out to help us get back on track toward the village of Eynsford--back to the road at the

Eynsford Castle walls, looking from the inside out over the River Darent and countryside.



The ruins of some of the walls of the interior rooms of Eynsford Castle. They are made of very sharp split flint rock.



drive and continue on.

We did find the village without too much trouble, and had lunch at a lovely little "cafe" near the fjord of the River Darent. The townspeople were enjoying the park along the banks; kids were netting minnows, and picnic lunches were in evidence. Our little repast was a typical farmer's fare, and was delicious.

We then looked for Eynsford Castle, We passed by it once and almost a second time when I spotted the sign on a driveway going to a set of residences. Behind the homes and hidden from the main road stood the remains of the Castle. It was in a state of disrepair, and not the fine palatial residence of Leeds Castle or Arundal. But it was totally open for public viewing, a rare thing we were to find.

Eynsford Castle was a Norman fortress made of flint rock and mortar. The walls were quite thick, and the foundations of many of the interior rooms were still in place. One large part of the wall facing the River Darent had fallen down, and sections of it were laying on the ground. We could easily see how the walls fit together. We used up 3-4 rolls of film photographing the Castle, and delighted in this

special "find". I even climbed up on some of the flint-rock walls, before Maia pointed out the sign NOT to do so. I realized later that slipping on splintered flint was not a good thing. So I was lucky not to fall.

We stopped for some refreshment in the Castle Hotel pub which was on the main road and opposite the driveway entrance to the Castle. Maia had a diet coke while I had a half-pint of Master Brewers bitters. From there we entered and toured St. Martin's Church and the accompanying graveyard. This one was well-care for--the lawn was trimmed and the memorial flowers were nicely cultivated. From there we walked out of Eynsford, past some interesting shops and through some residential areas to the train station.

When we returned to London, we went to the theatre district to get tickets for the afternoon performance of the Australian musical *Hot Shoe Shuffle*. Our Brit-Rail passbook had an offering for a "two-for-one" tickets at a selected number of shows. Most of the choices sounded extremely depressing, but this one looked good from its description, and Maia did like tap-dancing, as I did. We opted to get the tickets in advance, rather than wait-

ing to get them the day of the performance. The stickler, of course, for these essentially half-price tickets was that we had to take the more expensive seats. This was quite all right, as we were to find.

We found a small cafe, Gigi's, which offered some French cuisine but American or Dutch beer; I made a face when the waitress said "Budweiser," so I chose the Carlsburg. I got up to go to the lavatory when two other gentlemen were seated. When I returned, Maia said that they made the same face I did when the waitress offered Budweiser.

### Wednesday: London Adventures

Wednesday was our day to stay in London. We viewed the American Embassy and Grosvenor Square, saw what we thought was the Canadian Embassy (we found another building with the Canadian flag near Trafalgar Square, so we weren't sure), and took one of the tube lines to Royal Oak. Yes, there was a train stop with the name of our city, so we had to visit it. We walked around the park near the stop, and wished that this indeed we our home city so that all we would need to do was board the tube to get to London. Ah, dreams of the days of a transporter system!

We planned only a couple hours' stay at the Victoria and Albert Museum which was a mistake. It should have been a days' stop, but we could not afford the time. We had a 3:00 show to make at the Queen's Theatre. On our way to the underground station, we stopped for lunch at Daquise, a Polish restaurant. The food was reminiscent of my early childhood (stuffed cabbage and dry, lumpy potatoes), and I washed things down with Zywiec beer.

We had allowed time to find and shop at Forbidden Planet, the SF bookstore in London (and elsewhere in the British Isles). We bought some gifts for our friends, and eventually wound up at the Queen's to see *Hot Shoe Shuffle*.

Anyone who likes tap-dancing would love this play. We were fortunate in several ways. This was the last weekday matinee performance—the following Saturday was the final show before taking it on the road. There were cameras in place to tape the performance for a December broadcast on BBC2, so our enthusiasm was encouraged. That was unnecessary, because the show was wonderful. And our seats were Row J, center. So from the tenth row on the main floor we had a wonderful time. The actors/dancers were "up" for the taping, and we enjoyed it very much. We picked up the cassette tape for this as we had done for *Sunset Boulevard*.

After the show we walked back to the hotel, rested a bit, and went out to an East African restaurant for dinner. They were out of Ephesian beer, so I

settled for Molsen's. The lamb dishes were spicy and unusual, different from most anything we had tried before, but nonetheless delicious.

### Thursday: Folkestone

It was windy and overcast as we walked to the underground the next morning. As we rode the train from Charing Cross station to the southeastern tip of England, the weather cleared, though it remained windy. Joan Temple met us at the station and we walked to her place on Grimston Gardens.

Joan Temple, as long-time readers of our travels know, is the widow of William F. Temple. I never met the man, though we had corresponded while I collected material about him for the *Lan's Lantern* special that I did on him and his work. When we visited England in 1990, we spent a good deal of time in Folkestone, visited Joan frequently while we were there, and fell in love with this lovely, seaside resort. This time the visit would be short, but it renewed our love for the place and especially Joan.

After a brief refreshment we walked to the seas along the coast, stopped for lunch at the Metropole pub. The food was very good, and afterwards traversed the coastline and watched ships in the English Channel. We commented that we had seen the entrance to the "Chunnel", the English Channel Tunnel, as we came in by train. Had business started booming as the authorities said it would, with the Chunnel entrance so close? Joan's answer was negative. Fewer people came to spend time at the resorts, and one of the car ferries had to close down. "In fact," she said with a wry smile, "we can't even get into the Chunnel without first going to London." It seems that there is no train stop in Folkestone, or anyplace nearby, where one could board to go to France. I'm not sure where cars would get on the Chunnel roadway, but at least the people could get over to France via the hovercrafts and jetfoils from Dover, a short train ride away.

We walked further toward Town Centre, passing the "band shell", a small shelter which kept the wind off performers. There were a few souls in the audience braving the chilling winds from the water. We saw the garden memorial established to commemorate those who went to battle on D-Day from the docks at Folkestone.

When we hit Town Centre, we turned inland and continued to walk around the town. We were better protected from the winds by shops and houses. Maia needed to cash some travelers checks, so Joan and I sat and talked. One of her neighbors was sitting nearby and asked how she was. It is a fairly small town, and everyone was quite friendly. This inquiry was a particularly nice gesture, since

The Leas: Sculpted pathways along the English Channel in Folkestone.



Joan had lost her son Cliff earlier that year.

Cliff Temple was a sports writer and cross country runner and coach. He trained some of England's top runners, including members of the Olympic team. His articles in the London *Sunday Times* were read with enthusiasm world-wide. Unfortunately, in 1993 Andy Norman, one of the most powerful officials in the British Athletic Federation, accused Cliff of sexually molesting Shireen Bailey, an Olympic finalist whom Cliff had coached. This was in retaliation for an investigative piece that Cliff had written which said that Norman had favorably treated competitors who joined the Chafford Hundred AC run by his fiancée Fatima Whitbread. Shireen Bailey said there were no truth to the allegations spread by Andy Norman. Still, the psychological effect on Cliff was devastating, leading to a divorce, a nervous breakdown, and eventual death in January of 1994.

Joan said that *The Sunday Times* had generously set up a trust fund for his children, and the rest of Cliff had seemed very appreciative of what Cliff had done for the sports field. Several times since his death there had been many cross country runs named in his honor. And Joan had been invited to "start the race", and hand over the winning trophy.

We were quite chilled by the time we returned to her Grimston Gardens flat, and her offer of hot tea and a chocolate treat was most welcome. We soon had to catch the train back to London. So, after several pictures we walked back to the station, and bid farewell. We told Joan that if she ever passed our way in the States, she had a place to stay. It was a very pleasant visit, and we were sorry

to leave such a charming hostess and a lovely town.

We ate dinner at the Greek restaurant around the corner from our hotel, the Taverna, and I had Carlsburg with the meal (they were out of the Greek beer!).

## Friday: Cambridge

This time we left from the King's Cross St. Pancras station for a non-stop train to Cambridge. We met some US travelers on the train, but saw nothing of them after we parted ways at the station. They were an interesting pair of young ladies who were originally from Pennsylvania. One live now in Los Angeles, and the other was going to school in New York. The LA woman came to Scotland to see her boyfriend who is from there—they had met while he was performing with the Scottish pipers in LA. She had come to London to meet her friend there, and were making a day trip to Cambridge to visit other friends.

We talked about our travels, and told them of our encounter with the protesters at Buckingham palace, and mentioned that we had seen and heard notices that the stations around the Palace were closed "for security reasons." "Oh," she said, "that's a code which means that there was a bomb threat. All the Londoners know that." That led to a discussion of the various "perils" indigenous to parts of the States. The midwest is plagued by tornadoes, the coasts by storms and hurricanes, and the west coast in particular by earthquakes. "I suppose you just get used to living with the local dangers," one of them replied. "Just like Londoners

Cambridge, from the top of  
St. Mary's Church tower.



get used to the bomb scares and the regular train strikes." We all agreed.

The first thing we encountered was the Cambridge Gardens. We spent about three hours walking through them. It was very nice, especially the way some of them were laid out. One series of beds was a chronological sequence of when various botanical items were introduced into England. There was a section arranged by "families"--like all the cabbage and broccoli together. There was a small turf maze, which Maia insisted on walking in and out of.

We walked a lot around other gardens, and the various colleges at the University. We climbed atop Great St. Mary's Church tower and had a wonderful view of the entire town. We visited bookshops and several outdoor fairs/markets. We got inside some of the colleges, and several churches where we were able to take pictures.

One major event for us was punting on the River Cam. We paid for the trip up river, and were given a punt, a low, wide boat which was pushed along the water by a long pole. One of the operators stepped on board with me as I took my position at the back of the punt.

"Are you going to push us?" I asked.

"No," he replied, "that's your job. I'm just showing you how it's done. Then you're on your own." He demonstrated how to let the pole slide through your hands, drop to the bottom, push away from the bottom to move, and let the pole trail a little as a rudder to keep it going straight. Since I was good with canoeing, I understood the principle.

"How many people fall in?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "Oh, only about three or four"--pause--"dozen"--another pause--"a day." He grinned.

We went along fine, looking at the colleges and gardens along the banks, and taking care not to hit any of the other punts in the river. It was tricky getting under the bridges so that we got through to the other side and not get stuck. Still, we almost had an accident.

I mistimed the stroke. I dropped the pole to the bottom, and gave us a big shove to get under the concrete road bridge. The top of the pole got caught on the bridge facing. I had to think fast. Either I let go of the pole and we drift with the current until we settle onto the bank, or I jump in the water after the pole and catch up to Maia afterwards, or hang onto the pole and hope that I don't end up in the water and have to swim after the punt. I decided to chance it and hang onto the pole. A surprised Maia turned around quickly as the boat suddenly stopped and started going backwards. I almost lost my footing but managed to get the punt back far enough to release the pole from between the bottom and the side of the bridge. I was much more careful after that.

Maia had her try at it, but we had waited until we turned around and were heading upstream. She was less successful, but it was indeed a fun hour.

We stopped in several bookstores looking for bargains, but everyone seemed to know the right prices of books. Since I was in England, I asked for books by Patrick Moore, his Mars series from the 50s in particular. No one had any. And we looked for something by Cliff Temple, and found a copy of *Marathon, Cross Country and Road Running*





Punting on the River Cam.  
Be careful not to fall in!

which was a combined edition of two of his earlier works. I scanned parts of it, and it looked quite interesting.

In the evening, before returning to London, we had dinner at Brown's Restaurant, which was recommended by the guide books, and the meal was fine. I drank Green King Abbot Ale with dinner.

### Saturday: Lewes

It was cool and cloudy on Saturday morning, but we decided to chance it and leave the umbrellas in the room. Normally this would mean rain, but the weather broke to mostly sunny as we took the train to Lewes, a city northeast of Brighton. Located on the River Ouse, the town of Lewes has a connection with the English Channel, and the surrounding fertile countryside made it a reasonable selection as a port and center of commerce and political activity.

We arrived early, picked up a couple of guidebooks and embarked on a fabulous adventure. The walking tour took us past gardens and monuments, but when we found the roadway entrance to Lewes Castle, it was blocked by Morris Dancers.

It seemed that this group of dancers from Lewes had a group of dancers from their sister city in France over to visit and entertain the inhabitants and visitors. I had not heard of Morris dancers, and Maia said that it is thought to be a corruption of "Moorish Dancing". She also said that this was an unusual occurrence. We encountered them twice: here and later after we had wandered about the city.

After taking pictures and watching the dancing, we made our way to the Lewes Museum (about 20 feet from where the dancing occurred) and watched a slide and video presentation on the history of Lewes. This took place in a room which had a scale model of the town laid out, and as the events unfolded, those particular areas of the city were lit.



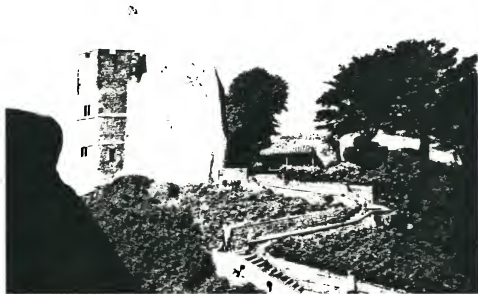
The Barbican of Lewes Castle

From there we went up the cobblestone roadway to Lewes Castle, past the Barbican and into the Keep itself. This was an imposing structure which was seen from almost every place we visited in Lewes. Once again we were able to climb to the top of the fortress tower and the barbican, and view the entire countryside. We spotted several sites we wanted to see, and eventually did so.

There were many shops, Anne of Cleves House, several churches and cemeteries which drew us in. We climbed to the top of a mysterious mound



The remains of the Lewes Castle Keep, taken from the top of the Barbican. The walkway is for the convenience of visitors, not enemies



which had been excavated, but no sign of any fortress was found.

We found the Priory, part of a religious house which gave shelter to travelers, but was fenced off because of vandalism. Still, we managed to get some good pictures, and some nice views of it from the places around the Priory.

After a break for tea and cakes with clotted cream, we walked along the River Ouse, and found a "flea market" where Maia bought a couple of fine pieces of jewelry, and I found two books by Richard Gordon: *Doctor in the House*, and *Doctor at Sea*. These had been made into a British sitcom in the 60s--very funny.

When we returned to London, we walked to the Charing Cross station and found a nice Indian restaurant for dinner. I forget which beer I had, but it was not one that I had before. At the table next to us were two couples whose conversation I ignored until one mentioned science fiction. I didn't recognize any of them, and didn't want to push in on their conversation to ask who they were. Later I wished I had.

### Sunday: The Trip Home

Sunday we left for Victoria Station before breakfast was served at our B&B. We needed to be at Gatwick Airport early enough to insure that we had seats for the trip home. As we were walking along the Gatwick Express train, I stopped to take a picture, and one of the train attendants asked if we wanted her to pose by the train. We said yes, and took a couple of shots.

At the airport we had breakfast, and slipped through customs without any trouble. Then we hit

the duty-free shops with our remaining money. Maia got some chocolates, and I picked up some small cigars for Dad for his birthday and Christmas. I also picked up a bottle of Tullamore Dew as a gift for Dave Stein, and was amazed that there was a woman handing out samples of single malt Scotches. After tasting some, I settled on the Glen Kinchie, which was on sale for half price.

The flight back was on time, and the people who sat next to us were genial and pleasant to talk to. We were stopped briefly by customs on the US side. The package of seeds we had bought as souvenirs from Kew Gardens was supposed to be declared. I couldn't find the package, but since it was in a sealed envelope, they let us go through.

Once outside, we expected to see Dave Stein waiting to pick us up. But no David. After about 45 minutes, we called to remind him we were at the airport, but there was no answer. After a half hour we called again, and he answered, admitting that he was stupid, and was on his way. When he got there, he said that it slipped his mind, but that he had reminded himself all day Saturday that he was supposed to pick us up. We waited until he got us home to give him the t-shirt and the CD of *Return to the Forbidden Planet* which we had bought for him and Diana. The Tullamore Dew was set aside for him for Christmas.

We picked up our mail from Russ, sorted laundry, and began to unwind. We were pleased to be home, though a part of our hearts remained in England.

### Ramblings 43.11

Maia had to work for three days, so I did what I

could at home, took pictures in for processing, worked the gardens, visited Kathy and prepared for classes and the start of school. I would miss the meetings this year, which were shifter to Thursday and Friday (instead of Wednesday and Thursday as they have been for the past few years). I talked to Nancy Holland, the secretary who helps me with the coffee orders and Kodak copier, and made sure she had everything necessary for this time period of time I would be gone. I also talked to a couple of administrators to let them know I wouldn't be at the meetings.

Finding my department chairman was a bit of a problem. He had not returned from Michigan's upper peninsula, so I left him a note. I did manage to find out what I would be teaching when I came back from the Worldcon, so at least I could be ready for classes.

With clean clothes freshly packed, and a list of things we were going to look for at the convention, and (mostly) prepared for the panels I was on, we went to sleep Wednesday full of anticipation.

## WORLDCON

### Thursday: Arrivals

This year we drove ourselves to the airport to catch the planes which would ultimately carry us to Winnipeg. We found our way to the gate and saw David and Diana Stein waiting for us. They had missed their flight by a few minutes--their luggage, however, made it on time. We talked and traded stories until the plane was ready and off we flew to Minneapolis.

After landing in the Twin Cities Airport, we scurried to the connecting-flight gate, #25. It seems that there is only one way to get to Winnipeg from the USA--through gate 25 in the Twin Cities Airport. Seated and waiting for the plane were Ken Moore, Dick and Nicki Lynch, K.D. Wentworth and several other fans. As the two-hour layover unwound, we were joined by fans and writers from all over the United States: Stan and Joyce Schmidt, Connie Willis, Harry and Laura Turtledove, Allan Steele, and many others.

Of course, the airline had overbooked the flight; they did not believe the **Conadian** concom who told them NOT to overbook the flight--the fans would show up. The last we heard was that the airlines was offering \$320 in vouchers to anyone who would give up their seat. One person who was already on the plane decided to take the offer with the comment, "I always did want to see the Mall of America". We gave him a round of applause.

In Winnipeg there wasn't much trouble getting through customs, but we were undecided whether to take a cab or use public transportation. The decision was easy when we encountered Kathy Mar who was waiting for her friend to come in from Washington State. He did not show up and so offered us a ride to our hotel. We gladly accepted her kind offer. On the ride to the Place Louis Riel, I made my first purchase--Kathy's new CD: *Made by Magic* from Dandelion Digital. (Strange to be actually purchasing a compact disc when I didn't have a CD player--but I sorta knew that I would be getting one for my birthday later in the month.)

Checking into the hotel was not a problem, and soon we were in the room we would call our own for the next four days. To our surprise it had a full kitchen--stove, refrigerator, microwave, and all the dishes and utensils necessary to make full use of it. And in the hotel was a grocery store, so we purchased breakfast foods so we could save on that expense. Then we found our way to the Winnipeg Convention Center and the Worldcon.

We did not get very far from the hotel, however, when we encountered John Stanley and Jeanne Mealy. After an exchange of greetings and life-summaries up to that point, we set aside Friday evening as a time for dinner together. No sooner than we departed from them than we stopped to talk to Forrey Ackerman, and relayed greetings from Joan Temple (from England). We chatted a bit then finally made our way to the Convention Center.

The lines were almost non-existent when we got there. Bill Higgins was in front of me a being helpful. When it came to be my turn, there was a



note by my name to see someone in the Convention

Operations room immediately. A sticky-note attached to my name badge said the same thing. So before I even went to the Green Room to pick up my programming items, I found Con Ops and inquired about the message.

It seemed that the concom needed people from the convention to call in to a radio talk show on Friday between 12 and 2. Since they were looking for someone who knew about fandom, SF and the literature, several people came up with my name (it's nice to be known for something, I guess), and they wanted to make sure I had the opportunity to help them out. Since I wasn't sure what program items I was on, I had to wait till I found out what my schedule would be. The Green Room was my next stop, therefore, and I got my materials without trouble. In the envelop was a hand-written note telling me to go to Con Ops immediately. I returned to the Operations room and said that I would be available during those times, and got the information I needed--where to make contact with the portable phone (outside the hucksters room).

Maia met me outside and I explained what was going on. We checked the Voodoo Message Board, and I found that I had a message already, even though I had not "checked" that I had arrived already. It was a note from Megan Bouchard telling me to go to Con Ops, so I figured people were really making sure I got the message. Shortly thereafter I ran into Al Bouchard who (need I finish...?)

At almost the same time I ran into Andrea Yeomans and Bill Lund. Since it was rather late in the afternoon, the four of us decided to get something to eat and we walked to the food court in the nearby mall, and had a pleasant dinner and conversation. Afterwards we separated. Andrea, Maia and I went back to our hotel (we were on the 8th floor, Andrea and Nancy Freeman were sharing a room on floor 23), stopping to get supplies in the grocery store.

Back at the convention center we ran into Marion Skupski and her husband. She moved from Michigani to New Mexico to pursue graduate work, got married, then moved to North Dakota with her New Mexican-born husband who wasn't used to the cold. Maybe in a few decades....

We went our separate ways after that. I tried to get the lay of the building so I wouldn't get lost, and eventually wandered around with Andrea. I missed being with her at a convention, (well, I just missed seeing her more regularly--her move to Cincinnati made me realize how much I enjoyed her company). Soon we went back to the Place Louis to party hop before returning to our respective rooms for the night.

### Friday: Panels

Friday was a flurry of activity. After breakfast in the room, and setting off the smoke alarm with the toaster (repeated several times while we were there), we headed for the Convention Center and the early morning panels. I had a Kaffe Klatche at 10, and arrived in plenty of time to find that the room had not been set up. The woman in charge did not arrive until that morning (airplane flight problems) and rushed to get the tables and chairs set up. There was also supposed to be coffee, but that would not arrive until after the first set of meetings was over two hours later.

Like last year, Maia showed up along with Minneapolis fans Polly Peterson, Marianne Hageman and her husband Michael Dorn. We were also joined by Sandy Taylor, who had moved from Dayton, Ohio to Grand Forks, North Dakota, a couple of years ago, and whom we had not seen since. The conversation ranged all over the map, but before we parted ways, we set up Sunday evening as a time for dinner together with the Minneapolis fans, right after my 5PM panel.

I found my way up to the hucksters room and made contact with the people from the radio station. It was after 12:30 when I found out they wanted me back at 1:30, too late to go to Andrea's concert. So I wandered through the hucksters room, made a couple of purchases, and talked to a lot of friends. I found a copy of *The Domes of Mars*, by Patrick Moore. I had been looking for books in his Mars series for the past several years. I remember reading his books as a boy back in grade school.

Eventually 1:30 rolled around and I was put on the air for about 5 minutes, talked about my fan activities, my favorite books and authors, and was asked if I liked Greg Benford's work, to which I answered affirmatively, "...though I have not had time to read his latest novel. But I am looking forward to it." I suspect that Greg was in the studio.

Kathy Tyers was in the hucksters room and I asked if she had a message for Helen Davis whom I would be seeing a month later. While we were talking, Janna Silverstein joined us. I asked Janna, who was an editor at Bantam Books, what the status was of Walter Miller's sequel to *A Canticle for Liebowitz*. She was grateful for a question which did not deal with *Star Wars*, but could only give me a general answer (Miller was working on it and was close to finishing it) since she was not handling that account. She suggested that I come to the Bantam editors' panel at 3 PM that afternoon and ask the question then. I did, and Miller's editor confirmed that he was about 90% finished, and hoped to have the novel in print in late 1995/early 1996. While at the panel I answered a trivia question correctly (In

how many movies did Boris Karloff star as Frankenstein? One, in *Frankenstein* 1970 he starred as Dr. Frankenstein.) For answering it correctly, I received a copy of *The Secret Oceans* by Betty Balantine.

At 4 was a panel about being a female writer which I dropped in on so to see who Carrie Richerson was. I would be on a panel with her on Sunday, and wanted to listen to her comments about writing. I also hoped that Andrea would show up to meet her. Andrea had written a folksong based on Carrie's short story "Sous la Mer". Andrea wanted to sing the song for her when Carrie had the time. After the panel, Andrea, Carrie, Elizabeth Moon a couple other people and I walked to the folk lounge where Andrea had her guitar stashed, and she sang "Song of the Sea". Carrie appreciated it very much, commenting that it captured the mood of the story very well. Elizabeth Moon sat entranced by the song. There was a little noise in the hall where Andrea was singing, but that didn't stop the performance. I felt that Andrea did a good job with it (and she later got a note from Carrie thanking her for the song). While I was there, I picked up the new CD from Dandelion Wine, the group that Dave Clement plays with. I wanted a copy of *Cheap Hooch* so I could review it.

I met Maia, John Stanley and Jeanne Mealy for dinner. We went back to the Place Louis and the restaurant attached to the hotel. Dinner was congenial, and the conversation alternately serious and light. It was a welcome respite from rushing around in the convention center trying to see everyone who said they were going to be there, and attend panels.

In the evening we went to "The Gather" with Anne McCaffrey posing for pictures, concerts by Dave Clement and Kathy Mar, a stick juggling performance by Ruth Anderson, and dancing. We enjoyed the company of Barry and Jean Longyear who surprised us by extending an invitation to their place in Maine when we had the time to visit. Finding the time would be a problem, but we said that we would come. We sat with Carol Lynn and Dick Green for most of the performances before exiting to the party hotel (where we were staying) and spent a bit of time party hopping. Soon Maia begged off to sleep, and I returned to the Convention Center for some filking, and finally met Nancy Freeman. I startled her by offering to escort her back to her room, but she was relieved to find out that Andrea (her roommate) and I were close friends. I bought her tape, and continued to party hop (attending the San Antonio and St. Louis bid parties (and a few others) before turning in for the night.

**Saturday: The Hugo Ceremonies**

After dealing with the toaster and smoke alarm, Maia and I walked a bit around the city and took pictures before entering the Convention Center and our morning panels. My first one was at 11, so I spent some time in the Green Room talking to other program participants. I spotted Betsy Mitchell sitting alone, and since it had been a long time since we had talked, I sat with her and found out how long it really had been--she was married, had a child and was working for Time Warner. We exchanged business cards, and I promised her a copy of *Lan's Lantern* when I mailed out #42 after we got back from Worldcon.

I sat in on the "Filk Teasers" at 10. Nancy Freeman was the first one up, and she sounded very good. She has a high, clear soprano voice. She is a little shaky with sustaining notes, but her enunciation is very good, and her soprano is not a shriek. Her 15 minutes was up too soon, and I stayed for a while longer before going back to the Green Room to meet with my fellow panelists.

My 11 AM panel was "How to Survive and Enjoy a SF Convention." Gay Haldeman was moderator, and we had a good time with Dave Hayman and the others who were on the panel with us.

Afterwards I wandered into the Fanzine Lounge and met with several people I knew, including Lloyd and Yvonne Penney who were running it, Mike Glicksohn, Larry Kestenbaum, Sherri Portigal, and a surprise visit from Mike Wallace. From there I went to the Hucksters room and talked with several people, including Elisabeth Vonarberg. I helped her with the pronunciation of some English words in the story she was going to read later that afternoon. She knew that her listeners would forgive any mispronunciation, but she wanted to make the experience as painless as possible. I've known Elisabeth for several years, and she is one of the good people in SF.

I also encountered Terry O'Brien. I was surprised to see him there since that last time I talked to him at **Inconjunction** he had been unemployed for over a year. He was working on contract for a firm in Wisconsin and earning enough to take a small room there as well as keep his residence back home in Indiana. There was a possibility that he could be offered a full time job with the company since they were opening two offices in the next year, one in Milwaukee and one in Chicago. He mentioned that he had heard on the computer nets that Bob Bloch was dying from cancer. I had not heard anything about it, but decided to check it out with someone who might know--David Kyle who had a table in the hucksters room. When I got to the table, Dave was not there, but Forrey was, and I

asked him about it. It was true--Bob Bloch had cancer of the esophagus, and did not have long to live. It was sad news, but Bob himself was taking it well, and had even written his own obituary so he would not merely be listed as "the author of *Psycho*".

At 1PM I went to the auditorium to attend the "rehearsal" for the Hugo ceremonies. I managed a few words with Stan Schmidt, and several other people. Nancy Freeman had volunteered to work the ceremonies, and we talked briefly then. I met Ariane von Orlow from Germany who was also helping out. She had heard of LL, but had not seen a copy. I got her address to mail her a copy.

I talked to Athena Jarvis who, with her husband, was running the Hugos. I cornered her and almost gave her heart failure. I went through the routine in case I was called up on stage to pick up the award, then asked, "What do I do if the name on the Hugo this year isn't mine?" She stammered that they were very careful about that this year. I smiled and told her I was only joking. She seemed relieved, but still somewhat flustered.

I was moderator for the 3PM panel, "Putting a Zine Together". The participants were all very good and active. I didn't have to exert much control, and the conversation flowed fairly smoothly. I don't quite remember how I spent the hour between the panels (probably went by the filking rooms and talked to Jan Di Masi, Kathy Mar, the members of Urban Tapestry, Pete Grubbs, Graham Leathers, Mary Ellen Wessels, Andrea, and Dave Clement).

Mike Glicksohn was moderator of the panel idea I had suggested: "The Many Faces of Fandom". It turned out that most people on the panel were fanzine publishers. The surprise was Daniel Fresno, who was from Brazil and sent there by his fan group to gather information and lots of "experiences" which he could relate when he returned.

We did cover a fair amount of activities in which fans participate, but the panel would have been better if more of a variety of interest had been represented.

Maia and I headed back to the hotel after the panel to get ready for the Hugos. The "prep" room was filled with people and drinks and snacks. I took pictures, and helped myself to some of the food. We were shown the Hugo and its base (hardwood maple in the shape of a maple leaf), and told, if we won, not to hold it by the rocket--there was a danger of it coming lose from the heavy base. We were given instructions on how to clean and polish it (stroke up and down), and how to take it apart for easier transport.

Barry Longyear had a brilliant speech by way of introduction. He uncovered a "trophy" which, after a lofty explanation of what the parts represented, he described as a Hugo rocket nose-diving under power. This was the "No Award" to be given to the best rejection letter. He proceeded to read the various rejection letters he got for one of his stories, starting with Ellen Datlow, to Dozois, to Schmidt, to the editor at Playboy, and eventually to Kris Rusch (to whom everyone said he should send it), who suggested Ellen Datlow. Finally, Kim Mohan bought it for *Amazing Stories*. The winner of the trophy, however, went to "No Award".

Then various other awards were given. The Sieun Awards, the Aurora, Big Heart, First Fandom, and so on. When Spider and Jeanne Robinson got up to present the Aurora for best Canadian Novel in English, Maia leaned to me and said what I was thinking, "He'll say the winner is *Lan's Lantern*." We both were rolling in our seats as Spider leaned to the microphone and said, "And the winner is *Lan Laskowski*." That got a round of applause and



The Hugo Winners.

a lot of laughter.

I agreed with many of the winners this year, and disagreed with a couple. I didn't think that Connie Willis deserved a nomination, let alone a win, for her short story "Death on the Nile". I like her very much as a person, and have enjoyed a few of her stories, but even people I know who like her work a lot were puzzled by the nomination.

There were some upsets: Bob Eggleton won for Best Artist. *Science Fiction Chronicle* beat *Locus* this time by 8 votes (I heard someone say that this time the *Locus* staff all voted). And Kristine Kathryn Rusch won for best editor, which award was accepted by Mike Resnick, who himself was one of the nominees. Bob Silverberg who was handing out the award looked at him with a puzzled expression. He stammered, "You are definitely NOT Kris Rusch!"

I took lots of pictures after the ceremonies, and then headed back to the hotel to change and party-hop, eventually ending up at the Hugo Losers Party given by the Glasgow committee. The gift this year was a shot glass with the phrase: "Have your next shot in Glasgow". I tried to "drown my sorrows" for losing the Hugo to *Mimosa* and the Lynchi by drinking the different Scotches which the committee was pouring. I talked with Mike Resnick who, after finding out I was reading *Doctor in the House* by Richard Gordon, offered to send me the other "Doctor" books he had, and the three films. I gladly accepted.

The best party of the evening was the Antarctic in '99 bid party, the brainstorm of Laurel Winter and some other Minneapolis-area fans. [See page 57 for the complete story.] Not too many other people I talked to recalled that there was a similar bid back in the mid/late 70s with the motto, "Who Goes There?" A few people actually recognized the reference when I repeated it. Aside from the various "ice"-type drinks and foods, probably the cleverest feature was the direct satellite feed from the South Pole depicting the current weather conditions (the TV turned to an open station showing "snow").

## Sunday: Fans and Masquerades

Sunday was a blur of images of things going on quickly. I wasn't fully rested because, after getting in around 2 AM the rain shorted some of the wiring in the hotel and set off the fire alarm shortly after 3 AM. We evacuated the hotel and soon after the "all clear" was given we walked back up to our room. We were glad that we were only on the 8th floor. Amid my blurry condition, however, I recall several incidents clearly.

I spent almost an hour talking with Jodi Kran-

gle (of Urban Tapestry) about her fiction and characters, songwriting, work, and other things. It was very nice to talk with her and I looked forward to more conversations at the next convention we would attend together. And I knew she was going to be at **Confusion**.

Jack McKinty, Nancy Freeman, Andrea and I went out to lunch at a Slavic restaurant, and I had perogies, something I hadn't had for a long time (since last Easter). The four of us had a good time, and I looked forward to seeing Jack again at **Chambanacon**. I was not sure when I would see Nancy next (after this convention), since she lived in Arizona, but I hoped that it would be soon.

I eventually found Spider Robinson to thank him for the comment during the Hugo ceremonies. He said that he hoped I wouldn't be upset by it, and I assured him I wasn't. Later that evening I passed by his "filk/Folk/Rock sing" and listened to some old Beatles (and other period) songs.

My final panel was with Carrie Richerson, Leslie Gaddall, Clifton Ambury, and moderator Marji Ellers. The title was, "Aging Gracefully", and dealt with health, mental and social issues. Carrie suggested aging "disgracefully", and I urged trying to stay healthy while getting older. Marji revealed that she was in her 70s, which floored most of us; she looks like a woman in her late 50s. She is very healthy and active.

Maia and I spent a very pleasant dinner with Polly, Marianne and Mike. They urged us to try to make it out to Minneapolis for **Minicon** next year. We would have to see what our finances would be like then.

I wandered about in the evening watching some of the masquerade, taking a few pictures, and attending some filking. I eventually wound up in one of the function rooms near the Filk Lounge and had some wonderful conversations with Jill Grubbs, Andrea, and a few other fans. I eventually headed back to the hotel for some much needed rest.

## Monday: The Return

We didn't plan much for Monday except the final packing of our things, saying goodbye to whomever was in the hotel lobby when we checked out, and getting to the airport in time for our flight home. Once again a host of fans were at the check-in and gate. We skipped the duty-free store this time, and waited patiently until customs opened up for passport checks. Then there was the wait at the gate where we all told amusing stories about flying. Finally we boarded the plane which, as the flight attendant announced, was "the continuation of the 52nd annual World Science Fiction Convention".



We got home, unpacked, did laundry, and I prepared myself for starting school with a long night's sleep.

## Ramblings 43.12

### Back to the Real World

School started all right and I found that most of the students were willing and eager to learn. Things are looking good for this year. Although I had a few problems individuals in some classes, overall the feeling and atmosphere of the classes is better than last year. I was teaching a senior Calculus class again, but these kids are much better behaved, and more interested in the work than those I had last year in this class. My Algebra IIB classes are small—together they numbered the students I had on ONE class last year. My Geometry classes both started at 17 students each, but I lost one from each class—the two students were misplaced and thus moved to other more appropriate classes.

On September 18 we had the family over to celebrate my parents 53rd wedding anniversary and my father's 75th birthday. The kids enjoyed the videos and books in the library and video room. I suppose I should mention that I turned 46 on the 19th, and I got a few gifts as well. Maia got me a CD player, so now I would be able to play and listen to all the CDs that I had gotten for review.

## CONTEXT VII

Maia and I went to **Context** this year instead of **Conclave**, mainly for two reasons: Stan Schmidt was the editor GoH, and we could visit Maia's sister Joy and her family. Secondly was that Andrea would be there for Saturday, and I missed seeing her (though we have talked on the phone at least once a week since she's moved). Also, I publish the winner of the short story contest, and I wanted to participate in the judging. As happened two years ago, Janeen DeBoard's story won, and it appears in this issue starting on page 23, with illustrations by Lore Ann Parent.

The con was fine, and I had a pretty good time. Julia Ecklar showed up from Pittsburgh with Rusty, and we talked for a while—but Julia wanted to see Stan about her upcoming story in *Analogue*. I had good conversations with Maureen McHugh, Fred Cleaver, and Jack Nimershein, and a lovely dinner with Tom Sadler and his family, Helen Davis and her family, Maia and Andrea. The panels I was on all went off well. The biggest problem with programming was that with this new hotel all the rooms, including the filking room, were closed by



Maia interviewing Stanley Schmidt

midnight. Andrea and I talked for a while with Juanita Coulson, then wandered up to the consulate which was closed down by hotel security at 2 AM. Jeff Tolliver, who ran the consulate, locked the doors as per the guard's instruction, but we all stayed up until after 2:30. Andrea crashed in our room for the night, and left for home after breakfast on Sunday morning. She was not pleased with the lack of filking.

We stayed until my last panel ended, then headed for Joy and Dale's house. We had a very pleasant afternoon with them and the puppy, and left around 5:30/6PM. We got home later than I had wanted, but since it had been such a relaxing weekend, I didn't mind.

## Ramblings 43.13

### School and Parents' Weekend

The weekend of October 14-16 was Parents' Visiting Weekend and Homecoming. I didn't have too many parents visit my classes, but those who did benefited from the meeting. Afterwards I changed to gardening clothes and working cleaning up the garden (taking down tomato cages, draining hoses, ripping up dead plants, etc) and preparing it for the winter. I wished I had a rototiller to chew up the ground before the snow came, but I didn't, and I didn't have the time to do it by hand.

The following week went slowly. I prepared the kids for their weekly tests, this time on a Friday instead of the usual Thursday. Getting time off from classes to do *anything* is a real chore at Cranbrook; the administration wanted *all* classes covered and none canceled unless there was absolutely no way they could be covered. Thus I arranged for mine to be babysat while the students took tests. Of



course, that meant I would have my hands full correcting them when I returned from **Mile-Hi-Con**, but that was all right. I was going to have a good time in Denver.

## MILE-HI-CON

After setting things up with my replacement teachers by arranging for all my classes to have tests on the weekend of October 21, Maia and I boarded a plane at Detroit Metro Airport (Thursday evening, October 20) and flew to Denver Colorado for **Mile-Hi-Con**. John and Bonnie Doran met us at the airport and drove us to the Sheraton where the convention would be held. Unlike many Midwestern conventions, there was no precon party that evening, so Maia and I stayed in our room read, and went to bed fairly early for the local time. We just had to keep in mind that there was a two hour difference.

It turned out to be sunny and pleasant all weekend, so Friday morning we had breakfast and wandered out among the streets around the hotel. It was primarily a business district, though there were some houses and a few shopping strips within walking distance. We took our time (the altitude of a mile did have some adverse affects on our stamina), and explored an interesting place called Castle Decorations (or something like that). Apparently the owners rummaged through all the old houses and buildings that were being torn down and removed iron grillwork, fireplace mantles, rails and bannisters, staircases, furniture and lots of interesting decorations and \*junk\*.

There was a message waiting for us at the hotel when we returned. I returned Bill Lund's call and he came by to pick us up, introduce us to Deanna, and took us out to lunch (we treated him and Deanna). After lunch he gave showed us some of the sights of Denver, then took us to where Nancy worked and we were given a tour of the printing shop. Bill also gave me a large drawing/painting of Green Lantern by Lorenzo Lizani, which I have now in my office at home (eventually I'll get a frame for it).

We were soon returned to the hotel where things were busily being set up for the convention. Eventually we managed to get our name badges and I prepared myself for my stint in the Cabaret.

The Cabaret is a sort-of show where the guests and local fans get to do things they normally would not do at a convention. It's sort of a showcase of their other talents. Somtow performed a compressed score of *Fantasia* on kazoo. David Barron, one of the special guests who teaches Klingonese,



Lan giving his "Complex Number" lecture.

recited one of Shakespeare's sonnets in the original Klingon. Ellen Datlow showed where the various organs of the body were on a t-shirt so that would-be horror and Sword and Sorcery writers would get their anatomy straight. PD Cacek and Robert Moore did a fencing demonstration. One fan did a "Pass the Murder" mime with sound effects, and had volunteers (Bill Lund and Maia helped out) from the audience die on stage, pass along how they died, and they tried to untangle the original circumstances (like the game "Telephone"). It was hilarious. As for myself, I gave a lecture on "The Complex Number System", somewhat like I do in class with a special twist for fans. Wil McCarthy, a new writer from the Denver area, did a seal act in the pool, with his wife as trainer.

I stayed up late, dropped in on the Niven roast, and talked to a lot of fans and authors I knew. While talking with John Stith I found out that his book *Redshift Rendezvous* had been optioned for a movie. I was introduced to Wil McCarthy and urged to look for his book in the huckster room the next day ("before they're remaindered," he quipped).

The next morning I dropped in on Maia's panel on "10 Tips For Better Writing". The discussion was lively, and the newer authors revealed more disturbing news about the field of academics ("My prof told me this was a bad story because he didn't know by second paragraph how it was going to end. I quit that creative writing class!").

My first panel on Saturday was at 1 PM and was "Alien Archaeology". For this one, the artifacts were indeed extremely esoteric. (Dave Gibbons made most of them and they were truly alien.) Everyone on the panel (Connie Willis, Susan

Crites, Wil McCarthy and moderator Carol Kimball) was superb. We all had a lot of fun with interpreting the artifacts, which was the whole idea.

Next, Maia moderated a panel about fanzines with Bill Lund, BJ Murphey-Lenahan, Roy Tackett and myself. I finally got to meet Roy after trading zines with him for many years. Like many panels, this wandered about with all of us reminiscing about zines we have seen read, loved and produced.

Bill joined Maia and me for dinner in a steak house across the street from the hotel. We had a delightful time, and came back filled. At 6 I had to report to the ready-room for the masquerade pre-judging. There I met with David Barron and Suzanne Carnival Reece to inspect the costumes and ask questions of the wearers. (I finally got to meet with Suzanne; back in 1981 we had a brief letter exchange before **Denvention II** the Denver Worldcon. We had not met until this convention 13 years later.) After talking with all the contestants, we took our positions for the presentations in the main hall. When all of the contestants had finished, we retired to the Green Room to talk over the winners, and within 40 minutes we were done.

This was all done in plenty of time for Maia's 9 PM panel on "The Best Heinlein Juvenile Challenge". This was the brain child of Laura Givens. Each panelist chose one of Heinlein's YA novels and gave reasons why they thought it was his best. Then anyone in the audience could challenge the choice, giving their reasons, and by audience acclaim the challenger could replace the panelist. Even after Maia mentioned that she had read every one of Heinlein's novels at least twice, people challenged her pick of *The Star Beast* with another. Connie Willis chose *Have Space Suit -- Will Travel*, which no one really challenged. Kenneth Roberts chose *Red Planet* which he defended admirably. William Kirby used *Stranger in a Strange Land*, and had some good arguments for it being a Juvenile, but was successfully challenged by an audience member with (I think) *Farmer in the Sky*. In the end, *Have Space Suit -- Will Travel* was determined to be the best RAH Juvenile.

Connie Willis and others with Maia on a panel



I stayed up to listen to the filksing (Bardic Style) and talking with several people far too late, but I had a good time.

On Sunday I had a 10 AM panel with David Barron, Roy Tackett, Bill Lund and Arlen Feldman. The topic was one I had suggested-- "What to Do between Conventions", which has been done often in the Midwest. Aside from various club meetings, the most common suggestion was being on a committee preparing for the next convention.

At noon I gave my GoH speech and talked about how you know when you really become a fan: you remember important dates and occurrences by fanish time--in relation to conventions. I also had to read the winners of the Masquerade. Ruth Thompson and Ellen Datlow also delivered a few remarks (we were told to keep them short--no more than about 10 minutes, which delighted everyone). We all received a marvelous plaque with a bronze replica of a piece of Ruth Thompson's art. It was lovely.

After that I stopped to talk to Carol Severance, a writer from Hawaii who had grown up in the Denver area (she was born in Dayton, Ohio). She and another Hawaiian writer, Linda Nagata, were on their way to New Orleans for the World Fantasy Convention. After about a half hour conversation Maia joined us, and we continued for another half hour. I look forward to running into her again at another convention (probably a Worldcon). Her novel, *Reefsong* won the Crompton Crook Award for best first novel in 1991.

At 2 I had my last panel. Bill Lund moderated "The History of Science Fiction" with Connie Willis, Vance Aandahl, and Dave Curtis. It was a fairly lively panel which ranged all over the timeline of SF, and we had a good time.

Bill Lund took us to the airport and stayed with us until we got onto the plane. The flight home was smooth. I didn't get a chance to sleep, which didn't bother me too much, but we didn't get home until about 11:30, a bit late, but Maia had taken a couple hours off the next morning to recover. I had to go in and teach. I also had 5 classes of tests to correct and grade, which I managed to do, so I still have a nearly unbroken record of getting tests back to my students the day after it was taken.

## Ramblings 43.14

The following weekend I managed to get caught up on few things like cleaning out the gardens, raking leaves, and organizing things around the house. In the evening we went to a pumpkin-carving party and met some new people. One of the

women, who is dating the host's brother, is the daughter of a woman I taught with in the HUB program 19 years ago. How small the world is!!

On Sunday I visited my parents and celebrated my mother's 74th birthday. We traded Christmas lists, and decided to buy some large gifts for the kids. Since my nephew Kris is my godchild, I will be getting him a TI-85 graphics calculator, in addition to the CD player we are all going in on for him and his brother. Sarah and Joshua will be each getting a 13 inch color TV for their bedrooms.

The next weekend was comment weekend. The first quarter ended on November 2. Grades were due Friday morning, and comments on all student by Monday morning. I got them done early as usual, which enable me to relax for most of the weekend. We saw *Robert A Heinlein's The Puppet Masters*. Although there were a few changes, it was basically the novel and we both thought it came off extremely well. Donald Sutherland DID do a good job as the Heinlein character of The Old Man.

Keneau Reeves could have put a little more emotion into his part, but did all right. We and our friends agree that RAH would have been pleased.

School went on for a couple more weeks. The quarter ended, I wrote comments on all my students, and attend the Grade Review Meeting. Some time in that period I activated my e-mail account at Cranbrook, and immediately started to send messages to my friends outside the community. This new venture changed the morning habits I have had for years--I now sign onto the system after getting the coffee going and copying any tests or worksheets I need for that day (or the next day), answer what I can, and print off some of the mail so I can read it and make notes to answer the sender. Since my advisees this year turned out to be good students, they didn't appear on the lists of people to be discussed. Even the kids who earned D's in my classes were not on the lists, so I didn't have much to do at the Grade Review Meeting. Instead I spent most of my time in the computer room writing letters and sending messages. The next day was a half day of seminars about relationships, so we were able to take off for Chicago for **Windycon** about 12:30.

## WINDYCON

Briefly, I had a good time at **Windycon**.

Sharyn McCrumb was the Pro GoH, Janny Wurts was the Artist GoH, and Alice Bentley was the Fan GoH. This was the first time I have met Sharyn McCrumb, and I found her a delightful person and a good story-teller. Her two fannish books, *Bimbos*

*of the Death Sun* and *Zombies of the Gene Pool* are humorous send-ups of the fannish community. The humor is a bit biting at times, but I could see the stereotypes she mocks quite clearly.

It had been over a year since I had talked to Janny Wurts and Don Maitz. She told me about her new series then, and I picked up the first book in February when it came out. I started reading it that week (and have since finished it), and I do recommend it. *Curse of the Mistwraith* is the first of 5 books. The second one will be out in February next year, is over 1400 pages in manuscript form, which means over 900 pages (close to a 1000) in final form. It will be published as one book, not broken into two. (And Janny was delighted to hear that not one word would be changed by her editor!)

Alice Bentley is the owner/operator of the SF bookstore in Chicago, The Stars Our Destination. As a choice for Fan GoH, she was excellent. Her store has done a lot to add to the fan community in the Windy City.

Saturday night was the usual excellent costume dance, the Bazaar of the Bizarre. There were a lot of wonderfully dressed people there.



Jack Skellington and a Vampire

Throughout the convention there was a murder mystery going on. Moebius Theatre was contracted to keep up a special program of a murder mystery from Opening to Closing Ceremonies. My former student, Jill (Smethells) Fredrickson, her (new)

husband and others kept the act going to the point that occasionally it was difficult to get her aside to talk to her. Maia and I did eventually, and managed to give her the Wedding present we had brought with us. In talking with Jill, it seems that married life agrees with her.

Tullamore Dew is now back in the States. Hyram Walker imported Scotch Whiskey and picked up the license for distributing this favorite drink of the Dorsai Irregulars. The company had a special tasting display at the con, and sold out of their special glasses.

## DITTO DITTO

After a week of teaching and fending off a cold, I finally succumbed to the headaches, coughing, runny nose and itchy eyes, and close-to-losing-my-voice, but I didn't let that stop me from attending **Ditto**.

We were only there for one day--Saturday. I had not wanted to stay very late, but I did anyway. The morning activities started around 11:30, which was when we arrived. There were several people we knew (Lynn Hickman, Howard Devore, Pat and Roger Sims, Tom Sadler, Leslie Smith, Ken Josephans, Moshe Feder, Dave Rosenthal, Mike Glicksohn, Dick and Leah Smith, and many more).

Larry Kestenbaum was on the first panel, and eventually his wife Janice showed up. Tom Sadler, Maia and Myself went out to eat with Larry and Janice--to the Mongolian Barbecue in Ann Arbor. Our waiter was delighted when he found out that, except for Tom, we were familiar with the set-up (we made sure Tom knew what to do). He was taken aback when Maia and I mentioned Brighton as one of the places we had eaten at a Mongolian Barbecue restaurant. "I didn't know we had one in Brighton," he said, thinking of the town in Michigan. "In England," Maia and I said in chorus.

After dinner we went to Borders Bookstore before returning to the con. We retired to the Con-suite (where it was non-smoking, to the relief of my sinuses and eyes), and stayed to converse with people. I glanced at the name badge of someone who looked a little familiar, and nearly fell off my chair. "Twilla Oxley Price" read her name badge.

"I know You," I said to her.

"And I know you too."

She and I had two encounters during my first year in fandom--the only year I was in the SCA. It turned out that it was HER only I hear in the SCA too. She was single and lived in Ohio then, but now was married, had two kids, lived in Ann Arbor, and worked for a company that does Math programs. I

caught her up on what I was doing, and suggested that she try to make **Confusion** in January.

We left soon after that.

## Ramblings 43.15

Instead of going to my sister's house for Thanksgiving, we went to Maia's sister's house in Columbus, Ohio. I was still feeling badly because of the cold, so I wasn't that great of company, but I helped out as best I could. I spent a lot of time reading. (On the drive we listened to *Coyote Waits* by Tony Hillerman, and *Three in a Boat*.) It was nice to see every-one, especially Lea and her fiancée Jay. I took a lot of pictures.

## Chambanacon

The con was pretty good, I was nice to see and hear so many good filkers again. Bill Rintz, Bill and Brenda Sutton, Moonwulf, and Naomi to name a few. Murray Porath was back, finally, after a year of mourning for his parents. And he was well-received in the filkroom.

Paula Robinson was also there, and this was her first convention since her kidney and pancreas transplant on September 3. She was able to drink alcohol (in moderation), and no longer had to worry about insulin injections or dialysis. She had a panel about organ and tissue transplants.

There were several of the regular con-attending Mishappers there (in addition to ones already mentioned): John Filpus, Alan Dormire, Robin Nakula, and Dave Alway. The Never-Ending Filk Panel run by Bill Sutton talked about Pete Grubbs' farm burning down and the fundraiser going on to help him. Renee Alper brought up an idea of getting the evening filk started sooner--which several people liked, but it was said pointedly that filkers would have to get it going themselves. Many filkers like to attend room parties and talk to their friends as well as filk, so they would balance singing against the other things happening earlier in the evening.

There was also some feedback for OVFF, and Van Seigling was there listening to what people had to say. He took down all the suggestions, and would present them to the OVFF committee.

Sam Long was there and we spent some time talking with him. We had dinner together on Saturday night. He is doing well, and was very instrumental in letting people know that Toastmaster Bob Tucker had just turned 80. Someone had called the concom to let them know that Bill Rintz also had a birthday during the convention, so a cake was

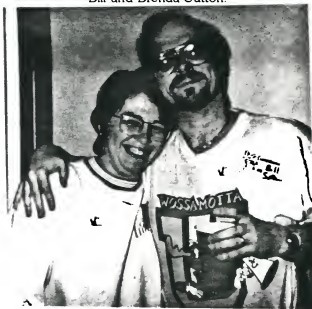


Bill Rintz holds the cake; Bob Tucker is ushered in by Sam Long

brought in to celebrate the "Birthday Boys".

The drive home was stressful. I expected one traffic tie-up outside Chicago, but the second one was a lot worse. East of St. Joseph/Benton Harbor Interstate 94 narrows from three lanes to two, but because of construction it narrowed further to one lane. More than an hour (and four miles) later we were traveling at about the posted limits in a single lane until the freeway opened up again. We once again got home late, in time for me to shower and get to bed for a little sleep before going in for an in-service day.

Bill and Brenda Sutton.



Ramblings 43.16  
SCHOOL and the HOLIDAYS

The in-service days wasn't too bad. We were supposed to chose our own mini-sessions of information to attend. I wanted to learn more about the

e-mail program and Internet, so I signed up for that. I picked up a couple of useful things, but there were too many people who didn't have the basics of e-mail down in the class for us to do the more advanced stuff.

There was an offering of a new grade-book program which I thought would be interesting, but after seeing it, and barely understanding what it could offer, I found that it would not be compatible with either the Mac Classic I am working on, or the IBM clone we have. So, unless I used it only on the LAN system at school, I would be unable to use it at all. It looked as though it had some very nice features, so it was disappointing that I couldn't use it.

For the next two weeks I pushed the kids in class. Most were willing to work, but a few were not there mentally. The midquarter comments woke a few up, and I got a little more cooperation then. Still, there were too many who didn't want to be in school.

The last week of classes before vacation wasn't too bad. It was still difficult for some kids to concentrate on what they were doing, and there were a few who left early for their vacation. Most, however, were around for the usual Thursday test. But on Friday, December 16, less than half the kids showed up for my last two classes. No, I wasn't pleased, and I was also angry with the ones who came back from the vacation late. They, and their parents assume that we teachers have nothing better to do with our time than to help their little darlin's catch up on what they missed. This kind of presumption irked me no end.

Anyway, I was glad to get away from the kids for two weeks. I did have intentions of putting together all the review sheets and exams that I would need for when we returned, but by the end of the first week of my break, I abandoned that. I slept in, did a little reading, but mostly watched videos. I caught up on all the *Babylon 5* episodes and many of the shows of *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* and several other of the hundred or so movies and serials that I've collected but hadn't seen. I also caught up on cataloging the backlog of books and magazines, though I still have a dozen anthologies that I have to cross catalogue by author and title. I first have to check to see if there is already a card for the stories in the catalogue already.

Maia's sister Joy was supposed to have come up that first weekend (Dec 16) but didn't because Joy's daughter got sick, and she wasn't feeling well that Thursday night when she called us to cancel. Instead they came up the weekend of January 6th, and we had a good time--she, Dale and Denise helped us take down our tree.

Christmas morning Maia and I spent together



Maia opening her presents

alone. We slept in, had a good breakfast and over coffee and tea we opened our gifts to each other. I got her several videos which she wanted (*Shadowlands*, *The Remains of the Day*, *In the Name of the Father*, *The Piano* and a few others), the Dave Barry daily calendar, a power-popper so she can make popcorn in the microwave with seed corn (rather than buying the little bags) along with oil and seed, a pair of earrings made by fan Darlene Coltraine, and an opal pendant on a rope chain (I bought the stronger chain so that she wouldn't have to use the cheap one that came with the pendant). She got me a set of Math books which contain es-says and articles about math, George Takei's autobiography *To the Stars*, a few miscellaneous things, and a set of earphones with a broadcast pick-up. The pick-up is hooked to the VCR audio out-put, and it transmits the signal to the ear-phones. I have ruined several pairs of earphones by stepping on the phone cable (attached to the VCR) when I got up and pulled the wires out of the phones. Now I am not tethered to the VCR by a cable. I can go into the kitchen, bathroom and my office and still hear the show, without disturbing Maia. She also got me a "Where's Waldo" tie, and a t-shirt with a Latin quote on it which, in trans-lation reads: "If you can read this, you are very in-telligent", or more sarcastically, "If you can read this, you're too smart!"

The rest of the day was spent as usual with my family. The gift exchange was fun, and we all got some very nice gifts. The dinner was filling as usual, and we all had a good time.

Monday was a recovery day so we did very little, but on Tuesday we had our friends Chris and Pat over for dinner--they were our "best people" when we got married. Chris worked at Cranbrook

as a counselor before getting a job with EDS. We have kept in touch, and now have made more of an effort to see them. It IS much easier to entertain with one's own house!

On Wednesday we visited with Mitch and JoAnne Radelt and their 4 kids. Rather interesting, since they run a rest home, as well as work other jobs. On Thursday we had dinner at Polly and Bill McIlrath's condo along with two other couples from Cranbrook. Bill is the college counselor--nearing retirement age, but he will work until Polly reaches her retirement--several years from now. They moved off campus in the same school year that we did (only 6 months later, in June). They are much happier now. The eight of us had a wonderful relaxed evening--no hurry, just pleasant company.

The movie-fest which had been planned for the Friday before New Years was canceled when the Tim and Boni had to fly down to Florida because the Tim's father had undergone a difficult surgery. New years was spent at Chris Clayton's and Becky Price's house. They have had a party every year since they were married except last year, when the contractor who was supposed to have remodeled their house skipped town and left them with areas open to the elements. Not good for winter. The work was finished this fall, and they both relished having the party again, and showing off their place.

The return to school was painful, but as a professional I was obligated to do my best. As I mentioned above, the kids who came back late-are behind, and I am not sympathetic about that; they have to catch up on stuff by themselves.

I managed to get some review sheets ready for them, and I got the exams done by review "week", which was only two days this year. I found out the math exams were the last day of the exam period--not fun, though I was glad that this year **Confusion** did not fall on the weekend after exams. The con was a weekend later, and I needed that sort of relaxation after arguing with all the kids on how poorly they did on the exams.

On the Saturday before exams (January 14) Mark Bernstein and Sharon Brevort had a gathering of fans to watch significant episodes of *Babylon 5*. It started at Noon, and we left about 10:30 PM. Maia had not seen any of the episodes before, and I was caught up on all that I had taped. I found out that I missed at least one ("Parliament of Dreams"), but it was extremely interesting to view the earlier ones in light of what has happened in the series since. Maia is going to watch the others now, since she has an idea of how well-put together the plot is.

At this point I will stop, and pick up with Exams and **Confusion** next time. [x]



# The China Syndrome

A trip report by Susan Schwartz

When I wrote my trip report, "Romancing the Turquoise," in Chuq von Rospach's fanzine *OtherRealms*, I learned that when I travel, I seem to manifest a persona who is part Amelia Peabody, part me and part First Contact officer in a science-fictional world that I haven't come up with yet: Le Guin's Ekumen, maybe. I also spend a lot of time being Alexandra, my Byzantine princess who took the Silk Roads.

Basically, I call this Imaginary Traveler the Memsahib. Not because she has all the terrible habits of the British Raj, but because the Memsahib firmly believes that preparation, comfortable shoes, sturdy luggage, goodwill, good health and good manners are the best things she can do to enjoy her trip. The Memsahib is also firmly convinced that there is no need to apologize for herself (note how she differs from my usual persona) or her country. In fact, she believes that the ritual bashing of American tourists causes all travelers to lose face.

Here is her viewpoint: I am delighted to be here. I will be a courteous guest to the best of my abilities. I will use my best manners and attempt to respect yours as well as I possibly can. I assume that you will be a gracious and understanding host.

Every time I've let the Memsahib emerge, I've had a wonderful time. So this time I evoked her deliberately. Before the trip I went shopping for clothes that had some red in them: the Chinese consider red auspicious. Even a bride in Western-style dress in Taiwan will wear red shoes for luck. I loaded up on the correct medications—Imodium-A just in case of stomach upsets, eye drops, Évian spray for the trip and Xanax for flight anxiety. Yes, I'm a white-knuckle flyer, a terrible one; and there is no way I was going to stay awake for 13 hours on the LA/Taipei trip holding up the plane. So, Xanax, no booze to speak of and no coffee. (This proved to be a smart move. I took one pill on the flight to LA, another on the flight to Taipei; and repeated the procedure coming back. What, *me* worry about a little turbulence? Fortunately, that's all there was.)

The day of the trip—Saturday, March 26—I call TWA and find out that if I arrive two hours

early, they'll check my bag through to Taipei. I call a cab. The driver turns out to be Spanish, a Castilian speaker. We discuss verb forms on the ride to JFK. While I don't officially know Spanish, I can read it for research purposes; and I can extrapolate from other Romance languages. The reason I mention this is that the group I will be joining was one third American, one third Chinese and one third Spanish. I was glad to be reminded that Castilian speakers lisp, whereas Latinos in the Americas do not.

The airline check-in clerk is Chinese. Someone says, "*Ni hao*," which means "hello," to him. I was to hear that a lot. There are no upgrades to Business Class on the flight I am taking. If I'd gone on the earlier flight, there would have been: do I wish to transfer? I don't take the upgrade on the earlier flight. For one thing, I'm traveling with Rob (Roberta) Cohen, an agent at Richard Curtis' agency. For another, I'm always spooked that if I divert in one tiny particular from the itinerary, Bad Things will happen. In other words, Schwartz doesn't screw around with the Travel Gods.

Rob is nowhere in sight as I wait at the gate. No problem at first; she's not as morbidly punctual as I am about showing up at gates. But as we are about to board, I tell them I expect her to be late. "We won't hold the flight," they tell me.

Good grief, have we ticked off the Travel Gods already?

Even at that last moment, I think of wussing out. I also decide that my life wouldn't be worth a plugged nickel if I did. I board.

I hear the sounds that mean they're pulling the entry away from the plane. I hear laughter, gasping and the thunk of far too much luggage being schlepped down a narrow aisle. It is Rob. She started out three hours ago from midtown and got stuck in two roadblocks, traffic and God knows what else. Once she hit the airport, she was badly misdirected at least twice and made the last sprint to the plane dragging luggage, carry-on and laptop computer. She has had her hair braided in cornrows, almost down to her waist. This is going to prove a conversation piece in Taipei.



And so, we're off! The plane starts to bounce. "Oh God," I say, and take my Xanax.

I have two books, Wharton's *Age of Innocence* and MZB's *The Forest House*. I start with *Age of Innocence*, pass up some sort of stupid chase movie, eat a fairly adequate dinner and arrive contentedly in LAX, where we have a three-hour lay-over. Rob loads her stuff onto a cart (God bless the cart!) and we trundle over to Singapore Air.

The flight attendants are meticulously trained and polyglot. The men wear pale blue jackets (except for supervisors, who wear gray); the women, who look like Balinese dancers, wear batik sarongs. They are delicate-seeming and superbly graceful. No one stops smiling or thinking of ways to make you more comfortable.

Our plane is part of Singapore's fleet of Boeing 747-400 Megatops. Imagine a B-52 crossed with a stretch limousine and you've got it—tremendous range and strength and reliability, coupled with extraordinary comfort even in Economy Class. I got a glimpse into First Class. There are fresh flowers in the cabin. The Megatop fleet is the finest in international travel. Each 747-400 carries about 50,000 gallons of fuel and can fly 15 hours without refueling. New York/Singapore is possible—the nearest thing we have to an Orient Express.

I have an aisle seat next to two Indians living in Los Angeles. They are served a Hindu meal that looks delicious. I have spicy prawns that are delicious. I venture on a glass of wine, also excellent.

Travel socks, heated towels, free headsets, innumerable glasses of water and juice, and movies follow. I get hungry in the middle of the night and am served a chicken salad sandwich and lemonade. From time to time, turbulence threatens. I am shielded from it; but still, at one point I leave my seat and shut myself in the bathroom. I feel better enclosed. Silly as it sounds, this works.

Finally, I sleep. When I wake, the movies are over. We are in daylight. We have flown into tomorrow and missed March 27: it is now Monday. And we are about to land in Chiang Kai-shek International Airport.

It hits me: *I'm going to be in China in a couple of minutes*. I pinch myself. Literally. Once then, and again as we deplane. Signs are in Chinese and English; for the first time, I admire the characters. How are things different? Is the slope of the roof something we could call characteristically Chinese? What about the concrete molding? What about the pine trees that border the airport? Or the hanging planters of flowers in pinks and purples?

It's easy to get through Customs. The Mem-sahib's way is to smile, nod (almost a bow) and present papers, then thank the official. I am praying

hard for no luggage hassle. As I get down the escalator, "There's my suitcase!" Rob's is right behind it. We thank the Travel Gods and pounce. Carts materialize and we wheel our stuff out (yes, I know "you should travel light" is a mantra; but if your trip is quasi-official to the extent that you're on show, you show me how to do it with carry-on luggage when you don't want to block traffic on the plane with an Ellis Island's worth of baggage that doesn't fit anyhow...). I begin to look for what our American group leaders, Ching Yün Bezine and Frank Bezine, have told me will be there: a hotel information desk.

It's there! Another hurdle leapt. For the first time, we encounter the terrific willingness of the Taiwanese to help tourists. A man emerges and guides us to the desk. The Grand Hotel? Yes, certainly; we are on the list. A car will be called. It will cost NT\$1,200—about US\$40 for a 45-minute ride. Have we local currency? We have. A nice black car drives up. We and our suitcases are loaded in.

"We're in China," Rob and I keep saying to each other. Oh my God. We're here. We're in a traffic jam. We're in construction. Taiwan, and Taipei in particular, are in flux, constantly building and rebuilding. Space is precious on this island, about the size of Oklahoma with a population density greater than that of New York—and prices that are more like Tokyo's. Construction is wrapped in scaffolding and netting to prevent accidents. You're more likely to get run down by the mopeds from hell, a pastel fleet of terrorist motorbikes that go up on sidewalks and emerge from stoplights like a school of piranhas. During my stay in Taipei, I saw families crammed onto one moped, a boy and girl with a black Labrador retriever on a moped and a lady in a business suit carrying a moped helmet. There are no helmet laws, but considerable pressure to wear the things. There are also 17 moped fatalities a month in Taipei.

Into the city we go. The Chinese characters advertising all kinds of products in what is an extraordinarily entrepreneurial city are literally the size of buildings. I notice a lot of bride shops: elaborate weddings à la the film *The Wedding Banquet* (which is Taiwanese) are an industry in Taipei, and people spend more than the GNP on wedding photos each year. I also notice every manufacturer we see in the United States, a lot of Japanese ones and many Taiwanese manufacturers with both Chinese and English signs. The boat builders are in the south of the island.

We pull out of the center of town and head toward the mountains. Taiwan is bisected by a mountain range; this is just a foothill. But on it, in a loca-

tion that the *feng shui* experts assured her was auspicious, Madame Chiang Kai-shek (she is not liked on account of her extravagance, so it's well never to mention her) ordered the Grand Hotel built.

"Oh my God," Rob and I whisper to each other. "It's real." Imagine an Imperial Chinese palace 12 floors high with red columns and about 10 stacks of balconies supporting a golden pagoda roof. Imagine red and blue and green carving and *lunys*, or dragons, projecting at every possible place like gargoyles. Imagine a sort of arch or gate with the same decor; and you've got an idea of it. We drive up past the health club (more pagodas; they are filling the pool) through a lane with trees arching and joining their branches overhead. White wrought-iron furniture lets hikers enjoy the view of Taipei across the valley or the mountain rising behind the hotel. There are 30 temples on that mountain, donated by rich men.

Behind the Grand Hotel is its older wing, which was used by Japanese officers during the Occupation of Taiwan in WWII. We pull up in front of the huge doors and go in. The lobby is easily four floors high—a tremendous expanse of red columns, lanterns suspended by thick red silk cords ending in decorative tassels, islands of brocaded furniture resting on huge floral Chinese rugs and huge porcelain vats (*famille rose*, *famille bleue*) filled with magnificent flower arrangements. Since Taiwan is semitropical, it grows flowers like we see shipped in from Hawaii. The hotel has both Western and Eastern dining rooms. We check in. It is about 7—check-in is actually at noon. A rule, I gather; but I am tired.

The Memsahib intervenes. She understands, she says, that the rule is a noon check-in. However, if it were possible to unpack and rest, she would be very grateful. The porters carry our stuff up to our rooms. They are small and somewhat austere—though the lamps are beautiful, one porcelain, one wrought metal. The bathrooms are about the size of the rooms—the turquoise of the porcelain (from Akron) that Hilton puts in the Shangri-la of *Lost Horizon*. The Grand Hotel gives you toothbrushes, even. (I've collected a bunch... the room boy who cleans the room must think I'm some sort of clean freak.)

The room has a sort of frosted window to the hall. Across the hall, the rooms and suites are much bigger and have balconies. I'm not looking a gift room in the mouth, however. I unpack quickly. We've met Frank and Ching Yun downstairs, and they're offering to take us up the mountain. I pass in favor of a seven-hour nap.

Dinner in the Chinese dining room follows nap. Rob and I grab a drink in the bar, then flake out.

Here are the members of our party: Me. Rob. Norma Libman, a writer for the *Chicago Tribune*. Dwight Link, president of Bay de Noc Community College [Escanaba, Michigan], a Midwesterner who is as steady and honest as anyone I've ever met. Frank Bezzine, who joined the Marines at 17, served in the Occupation Force in Japan during WWII and fell in love with the Far East. Ching Yun Bezzine, or as she's known in Taiwan, Yun Ching. She writes in both English and literary Chinese. Her family were refugees from the mainland. As a baby, she cried so much that someone suggested she be smothered lest she endanger all the others fleeing to Taiwan. She lived, and during the Occupation her father played a deadly game of working with the Japanese while secretly helping his fellow citizens. She went through law school, married advantageously but unhappily, and subsequently met Frank. They have as close a team as I've ever seen.

After passing out on Monday night, I wake to find myself in Tuesday. It doesn't feel like Tuesday. But today is the day we are supposed to sign up for the World Writers conference. Rob and I decide we wanted out out immediately and run outside with our cameras. Hundreds of people all over the 21-acre hotel complex and the mountain area are exercising, doing Tai Chi, or riding mopeds (that's where I saw the couple with the black Labrador).

The air smells different. Maybe it's the presence of so many pines and flowers. Or incense. Or cooking. Or the fact that the climate is subtropical; but the air smells spicy. We gaze out over the city from behind the spirit-gate sort of archway, then go in for a Western-style breakfast. Sort of. It's actually a combination of Chinese and Western, much favored by Japanese tourists too. Yun Ching gets me to try rice congee and a sort of pulverized and fluffed-up beef jerky. Not bad, but I prefer the made-to-order omelets.

After breakfast, I prowl the arcade of shops beneath the lobby. **Stuff!** Lots and lots of treasures in coral, lapis, amber, jade, you name it. Silks, embroideries, camera equipment and a very necessary drugstore.

At about 10, we trot back up. Mr. Fu, one of the conference organizers, has appeared. Late, which we discover to be characteristic of Mr. Fu, the most frenzied and overcommitted millionaire I've ever met. Everything is a hassle for Mr. Fu. I expect him to slap his forehead and cry "Oy!" Instead, he asks Yun Ching to translate his Cantonese for us. His English is poor, he says; it improves subsequently. He tells me that Tor has indeed sent my books and that he'll bring appropriate numbers of them for me to give as presents. Ceremoniously ev-

everyone exchanges cards with everyone else.

He's been working with Frank and Ching on a project, a book about a woman who is a Buddhist spiritual master and hospital administrator. Her name is very much like Ching's: it is Ching Yun, not Yun Ching. So there is a karmic link. This is truly quite remarkable, because the woman is being hailed as a sort of Buddhist Mother Teresa. They call her a dharma master and a bodhisattva. Frank and Ching think it's a privilege to work with her. Furthermore, though she is very holy, she is down to earth, rather like the Spanish Teresa of Avila.

Mr. Fu tells us that we are going to have to make speeches at an academic meeting after a meeting with **three count them three** newspapers. No problem. A day later, he tells us he wants them written. Okay, no problem. I'll get up early to write it. The speeches are to be translated into Chinese... maybe.

Details of finance and administration are dealt with. By this time, it's almost noon. Time for lunch, to which Mr. Fu invites us. He knows a restaurant in town (hot damn, we're off the mountain at last!) that serves Northern (Fubei, I think) cuisine, heavy on soy noodles.

It's hot. I change into a brighter, lighter outfit and off we go. We're loaded in two cabs. I ride with Frank and Ching, who is in the front seat to translate.

The driver begins to shout. Apparently, Taiwan's problems are the fault of the couple in the back seat (Frank and me). Apparently, we're the reason (and me not even born yet) that Douglas MacArthur screwed Taiwan. News to any of us. The cab driver is bitter. Both his parents were educated, but he never got much training. Both his sons are in college, however. And he reads a great deal, mostly history. When he finds out what Yun Ching does, he starts telling her about a secret bookstore and what she has to do to get in. He offers to write it down.

Mr. Fu has appeared on the sidewalk, fretting and almost dancing with anger. "He looks so angry," said our driver, "I think I'll go around the block again."

So he does.

Finally, we are allowed out of the cab. Mr. Fu rushes up and we never do get the address of the secret bookstore. We are ushered into the restaurant to meet Miss (Ms. hasn't fully hit Taiwan yet) Chou, who is married to Mr. Fu, and their two kids. The elder is a daughter with that deceptive remote fragility that young girls have. The younger is a son who is out of college and writing opera criticism. Mr. Fu wishes he'd get a steady — and manlier — job. He can't support the boy forever.

Lunch is delicious. I avoid the pickled pigs' feet.

We prowling about. It's almost time to return to the hotel. By now, the Spaniards should be there; and there is to be a press conference.

After lunch with Mr. Fu and his family, we go back to the hotel. Mr. Fu is distressed, as I said, with his son's career. Free-lancing won't support the kid in Taiwan; and, in any case, Mr. Fu is certain that being an opera critic isn't manly. The son has two books about to be published at age 23... parents are never fully happy, it seems.

By this time, the Spanish have arrived — a large delegation that includes not only a producer but a number of scholars and poets. And their Spanish/Chinese translator, Teresa Tu. And her boyfriend and her best friend. And her boyfriend. (Where's the scam? Right there. At the time, however, we didn't know. It was simply that the Spanish gentlemen were being kept from us.)

Everyone is herded into a freezing cold conference room and fed tea, coffee and cakes; and the reporters have at us. There are two, a young man and a young woman. The young man had gone to the Iowa Writers' Program and gave us copies of his poetry. Nice to see serious lyric poetry again. He explains that in Taiwan, if you write for one paper usually you cannot write for others. He has many questions for Ching and Norma as American free-lancers. He asks Dwight about writing courses at his community college. He asks Rob about agenting. And he asks me about time management. Apparently, there is a **very** successful Japanese writer/financial type of whom I remind him. Ha.

It is getting on to the time when we are due at the Lai Lai Sheraton for a welcome banquet held by Dr. Huang, Mr. Fu's boss. Since the room was freezing cold, I decide I am going to change to a dinner suit (the one I've worn at the Nebulas and the Hugos), despite protestations of "It's a lot of trouble," and "Let's be casual." The Memsahib doesn't listen to such. And the green-eyed Kzin, eyeing the Chinese/Spanish translator's turned-up nose and gold lamé sweater set, thinks, "Uh oh."

Now, for the Spanish gentlemen. I am making a hash of their names. The producer was Señor Javeloyas (I made the immediate and unfortunate analogy with *javelinas* because he seemed very arrogant); Sr. de Lara, oldest of the group and president of a Spanish version of the French Academy; Sr. Porpetta, a poet and, as we were to discover, a nut; Sr. Pavia, youngest of their group, an academic traveling outside Spain for the first time; Sr. Abeilán, a senior scholar; and one other man, I think, whose name escapes me. We have no handouts: Mr. Fu, screwing up. Where are *our* bios? As it

turns out, stuck to a manuscript of Ching's that he'd had for months and not read either. This is to cause problems later.

We go to the Lai Lai, another five-plum-blossom hotel, for our first ten-course Chinese banquet and our first encounter with shark's fin soup. The English version of my menu has gone walkabout; I'll write up subsequent menus, however. Dr. Huang proves to be a gracious man with a son in school at Reed. He seems concerned about trade and the pressure on Taiwan not to exploit endangered species (see *Time* magazine on tigers—no, I said nothing!). When the conversation turns to me, I merely point out that public pressure should be even-handed: Norway doesn't seem to receive criticism for its use of the minke whales. I don't mention Japan; you don't, in the Pacific Rim. Dr. Huang thinks the world is picking on Taiwan. Well, I know how *that* feels.

A Chinese banquet consists of ten courses including two soups and two sweets, one of those being home-grown fruit. The table is decked by a huge array of tropical flowers. The Chinese are surprised to see the Americans eating contentedly with chopsticks. One thing is new to me—not the chopstick rest (I've seen them in Japanese restaurants), but the rest in the form of a dragon, with a holder for the spoon. I watch Ching use the spoon to manage dumplings too big to be downed in one bite. The Spanish gentlemen begin to learn chopsticks.

Near each place setting is a pitcher of what would have been maple syrup in the United States. It's actually rice wine and looks like sherry. It gets poured into thimble-sized glasses for a drinking-with ritual right out of Patrick O'Brian ("A glass of wine with you, sir?"). You are supposed to bow, take the tiny glass in both hands, hold it up toward the person who is toasting you, drink, then hold it up again. But if the person says "*Ganbai*," you have to chug. There is a word that gets you out of chugging; I learned it very quickly.

The rice wine, hitting an unprepared palate, is quite something. So is the banquet. We present our gifts and pictures are taken by the photographer who travels with us. We meet Miss Lin, who will be helping us out—she's junior-most in the Lin-Fu-Huang office.

Back to the hotel and quick unconsciousness. I don't know how the Spanish managed with jet lag. The next morning, they are due to be at a Catholic university very early. From this time on, no one is ever early again.

Next: The Sino-Spanish-American wars begin.

Before I go on, let's get one thing perfectly clear. I don't permit the Ritual Bashing of Those

Rude American Tourists.

I've seen a few beauts. I've seen rather more beauts from some other countries. In general, what I've seen of American tourists has fallen into three categories: naive and nervous people trying their best and occasionally not succeeding; travelers doing a damn good job; and the two opposites—the self-consciously I'm Not Like **Them** and the Ugliers. When I leave the country I say nothing that might cause people in the country in which I'm a guest to think badly of my country or my fellow citizens: it's a quick ego-score to be "not like them," but I don't think people from other countries respect one for badmouthing one's fellow citizens. An apologetic shrug suffices, says the Mem-Sahib. It's my suspicion that people from other countries, if they were backed by the sheer muscle that the United States can summon, might not be as diffident as the nice U.S. tourists I've seen—and my observation is they're boggled when they realize that, powerful as the country is, its citizens want only to be liked.

The invitation from the Government Information Office is for lunch on March 30. It is also embossed in gold. Wednesday starts, then, with a logistical problem: how do you do heavy tourist-stuff, have a formal lunch, then do more tourist stuff? In short, what do you wear?

This is where custom takes over. In the mornings, we are told what we'd be doing and what is appropriate to wear. There is some grumbling about this—the cult of casual, of wanna-wear-sneakers, wars briefly with the far more pressing desire not to seem rude. Polite, of course, won't I am among mannerly, if shy, Americans.

My own solution is simple. Light dress—yes, it is shirtsleeves weather—good scarf to make the thing formal and my favorite walking flats...pale gold, this time, since the Chinese appreciate color.

Mr. Fu told us to be **on time** at 9. He is late, appears frantic, his tie flapping, his hair flapping and as wildly overcommitted as he always is. His office is a study in contrast: Dr. Huang is urbane and powerfully relaxed; Li-Mei Lin is smiling and eager to please and charming; and Mr. Fu...well, he is the one stuck with the job of herding not just American cats, but Spanish cats. Who are a very different breed of cat altogether...although I don't think he ever quite caught on.

We are herded (Ching and I did some fast shopping, looking at jade and coral and amber and silk, and ordering my chop—my name in English and Chinese on a stone stamp capped with my Chinese astrological symbol, the ox) onto the small, nice bus with the driver who isn't a kamikaze like nearly everyone else on the road. And, almost shiv-

ering with anticipation—they're letting us out! we get to see Taipei!—we are driven to the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial, a huge white and blue pagoda set in a park and right by the Performing Arts Center and the Opera House, which are built Imperial-palace style. In other words, they have gold roofs with dragons crawling over them, red columns and gold, green, red and blue ornamentation. And they rest on curved patterns of white granite paving stones.

The Memorial is huge. A spirit tablet stands atop the entrance. One is forbidden to smoke or behave inappropriately. Two slim, silent guards in particularly eerie pale green stand at parade rest with their automatics. If you have any stereotypes about the impassive East, they're it. With firepower. Inside the Memorial is a sarcophagus. What this reminds me of is Atatürk's Anıtı Kabir in Ankara—the monument to an autocrat that testifies to his people that they have been *ruled*, along with the gardens and the cultural activities that show his benevolence.

The gardens are lovely. They surround a lake ornamented by one of those half-moon bridges and filled with carp. Bright-colored machines in the shape of golden carp stand near the lake; for NT\$10, you can get carp food and feed the huge, greedy things. They have no fear of humanity, which they regard as a source of treats. The fines for killing the carp can range as high as \$10,000. I hope that's in New Taiwanese dollars. I wouldn't count on it. One carp opens a huge mouth. He is ugly for these carp—orange, with black specks. He doesn't give a damn. A group of children wearing yellow and green preschool uniforms greets us with peace signs and cries of "Mickey Mouse!" They are charming. Like the carp, we are delighted to see them.

A bride and groom walk across the patterned pavement. She is wearing a white gown and red shoes. We bow and hold up cameras. They nod and smile and say, "Thank you." So, away we snap. I say, "Many happy years," and they bow again, as I do. I later find out that what I said is a gentler form of "*Wan sui*"—may you live ten thousand years, the salutation for emperors and for Chiang Kai-shek. It used to be used, Ching says, in situations calling for extreme politeness. Well, what do you know?

Noise draws us to a sort of gallery, past a feral cat with a long, elegant nose and slanting eyes. I'm trying not to tell myself it looks "Oriental," whatever that means; but I think Akitas (which are Japanese-bred) look like Oriental dogs, so what do I know? The noise intensifies; we have hit on an operatic jam session. Someone is playing the *hu-*

*chin*, which resembles a primitive violin with a coarse bow drawn across a slender neck above a soundbox. At first, the *hu-chin* (*hu* = north; *chin* = stringed instrument) sounds like someone's doing something terrible to a former cat. After a while... I \*like\* this sound. The singer sounds like no one I've ever heard, but I find myself studying his breathing and how he draws his voice from his body. It is *totally* different from Western vocal production, but just as moving.

He holds a tea cup from a thermos. The *hu-chin* player is pale, with thinning hair and a sloping brow. The longer he plays, the more remote he seems, withdrawn into a reverie of his own. If he knows we're taking pictures, he ignores it. A truck backfires. He ignores that, too. The windows are glassed in, each window a different shape and barred by different patterns of wrought iron.

We leave the complex and find a Buddhist temple to prowl through. It is vital and untidy and strung with lanterns. A Taoist monk is conducting a funeral ceremony. Food—real and spirit food—awaits the mourners as the monk rings a bell to summon the departed.

People light incense and bow. I do not photograph them any more than I'd take snapshots of people in church. They wash fruit and flowers—those gorgeous flowers of Taiwan—and offer them at various altars. One shrine is lined with votive lights in red.

Then it is time to go to lunch. We go in the bus to the Government Information Office. Let's leave the notion that this is a PR agency outside with the tooth fairy, shall we? This is the organization that needed the long lead time. It is impressive. Its building, despite the glass, is defensible.

There is a picture of the White Jade Mountain in the lobby. I wish I could get inland or to the south—no time this trip, dammit.

Up the stairs we go the GIO's banquet room. Lunch is catered by a restaurant that calls itself The Ritz. They certainly put it on, Chinese-banquet style. Our host is the director general, Jason Hu. He is even more elegantly tailored and serene than Dr. Huang, who is also there, but eating carefully: he's in the hospital for tests—or should be—but he emerged for what is a command performance.

The Spanish gentlemen join us. They are not skilled with chopsticks. Their translator is wearing an improbably jeweled sweater that prompts a quiet but catty observation from Norma: she'd neither pack nor wear such a thing. Not before 4 p.m., remarks the Memsaheb, who owns several but packed none. The translator is talking about, of all things, the *corrida*. Even with no Spanish but subway-Spanish and no Chinese at all beyond *ni-hao*

(hello), *shih shih* (thanks) and *ganbai* (*L'chaim!*), I can understand her: she's demonstrating the skill of the picador. The Spanish gentlemen are silent. They know how other Westerners feel about the national sport. Frank comments, "She's leaving out the point of view of the bull." I mutter something about her not particularly wanting *her* ears or tail served up on a platter.

Who is this woman and why is she talking so much? Well, turns out she was married to someone in the GIO and still maintains ties. She has an import export business and she's playing every angle. She is to spend the next few days in a Face War with Ching, especially. She is a hired translator, though she sees herself as an entrepreneur and the Americans' social and cultural superior. This is delusional: Yun Ching translates for us, but she is also our leader. Teresa Tu likes this **not at all**. Meanwhile, she keeps the Spanish gentlemen away from us. This is not good either.

The director general seats us at our place cards: Roman letters for the Westerners, Chinese characters for our hosts. Here is the menu:

Shark's fin soup (that's twice now) with chicken wing  
 Minced lobster served on a lettuce leaf  
 Pan-fried beef fillet with black pepper sauce  
 Superior soup with home-made fish ball and bamboo piths  
 Braised vegetables and lily flower  
 Steamed porky with bamboo shoots  
 Steamed vegetable dumpling  
 Dessert—some sort of warm, sweet rice soup  
 Fresh fruit  
 Tea

Plus side dishes and, of course, the thimble glasses of rice wine.

"Doctor Schwartz," calls Dr. Hu. He is drinking with each of his guests in turn; and it is now mine. He holds up his glass politely in both hands. "*Ganbai!* And let us see, Doctor, if you remember the word."

I smile at him and say something that sounds like "Shoey," but that lets me get by with only tasting the rice wine. I have no desire to get bombed here. In any sense.

"You are cautious, Doctor."

"Sir, my father taught me well."

When no one's looking, I indulge in a group *ganbai*, just to see if I can. I can.

After a couple of hours of lunch, we are rolled out. The Spanish gentlemen are too torpid to mill about, and we are loaded onto our bus.

I was excited at getting to see the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial. But now, we are headed up into the hills to the Cultural Palace, built to house the more

than 700,000 objects taken from Peking/Beijing when the Nationalists left the mainland.

For easy reference and to avoid hassle, I have adopted the nomenclature of my hosts. The People's Republic of China is "mainland China" or "Communist China"; Taiwan is Taiwan, the Republic of China, or just China. Sundered from the mainland Taiwan is: the people are Chinese and fiercely proud of their 6,000 years of heritage. It is a feeling with which I can empathize—and it's made stronger by the fact that Taiwan really is a nation in Diaspora. (I do not say this, of course.) Now, about that Palace. Chiang Kai-shek ordered it built, too, to preserve the treasures. I suspect that Taiwan sees itself as a conservator. I suspect that the People's Republic of China sees it as having looted Beijing.

I *know* that I'm going to get to see neat stuff, I'm going to get to see neat stuff. My hands are cold with anticipation. This is material I've studied. I've seen samples and replicas, but this is probably the most extraordinary collection on the face of the earth.

It is spitting rain on the palm trees when we roll in. And we only have an hour and a half. Teresa gets the Spanish gentlemen their guide. Our guide is a young lady dressed in the museum's uniform/suit and some rather neat magenta suede flats. I admire them, then forget about them. She is in danger. I am about to pounce on her and demand that she (a) show me **everything** and (b) tell me everything she knows. **Right now!** I'm practically shaking with the lust for research.

We pass a "living exhibit" full of "chins" and scholars' brushes and inkstones and water holders. It is lovely. Then we get to the tortoise shells and scapular bones used for divination. I see no reason for the guide to apologize that "people used to believe...."

The floors are very slippery. Tough. I'm not falling. There are Shang bronzes over there. A whole roomful of Shang bronzes. They look like they came from Vulcan with their odd, angled handles and the zoomorphic sketched patterns. They are a good couple of millennia old. Following them is Chou dynasty stuff. And there are Han horses! I *am* shaking now. Abruptly, all the research I've done turns transparent and I understand how the procession of dynasties works out. I did it right!

But we have arrived at the jade. There is, apparently, jadeite (which can be vari-colored) and nephrite, which is pale green. I don't know whether the deep emerald green Taiwan jade is jadeite or nephrite. We see a cabbage made of jadeite, the stalk a pale green, the leaves a darker one. But my eye is caught and my heart wrenched by a brush



holder carved in the form of a lotus leaf. It is for a scholar-aristocrat to fill with water, then set his brush into it. The lotus leaf is crumpled so casually it looks like a fall of silk—yet it is carved of hard, translucent jade.

It is so beautiful I am getting chest pains looking at it. I try to get around that by talking about jade. I ask the guide how you cut it. She explains about the hardness of stones without mentioning the Mohs scale. I ask about the Han jade armors. They're on the mainland. She looks at me suspiciously. I *know* stuff. There are Jamaican ladies from Flushing listening in, but as much as I'd like to be nice to homegirls, I have to see that jade.

She takes us into another room. "Anyone want to guess what that blue is?" Kingfisher feathers! I blurt.

How do you know this? she asks.

I tell her I read a lot. We are now looking at ivory—a nest of nine carved balls, the work of three generations. A lamp, pierced until light shines through it. Or a peace-stone, carved with a boat filled with pilgrims.

That was "peach-stone," not peace-stone, though the contemplative aspects of this painstaking detail work (glass snuff bottles painted on the inside of the glass by angled brushes one hair thick?? Toys to keep a drowsy emperor awake!) are joy. I think of the jade water holder and I cry for joy at its beauty.

The tour is too short. We are released to the gift shop. The Shang bronzes cost hundreds of U.S. dollars and would be a beast to carry. The Han replicas are too delicate. I pay NT\$1,000 for a wonderful book and thank the saleslady for the privilege. I start to babble at Sr. Javeloyas. He'll hear nothing of it.

Humph.

We get back onto the bus. It's stopped raining. Back to the hotel to change. Mr. Fu has suggested we dress up, but he's not going to be there and we're visiting a newspaper. Tough. I put on culottes and a jacket.

We have now come to *China Times*, one of the main newspapers. I can't keep track of whether it's pro- or anti-government. I don't try. The newsroom is full of floral arrangements on stands, with long yellow ribbons marked with black characters. An altar has been set up below two photos marked with black ribbons: two reporters were in that plane that crashed in Siberia because the idiot pilot let his kids fool about with the autopilot.

We are led into a conference room and given papers and a pep talk on the paper and freedom of speech. Or what passes for it: American-style freedom of speech is science fiction to these people, I'd

guess. No, that's not me being culture-bound, either. Think of the recent free-speech flap with Canada—and that's *this* continent.

Only the Spanish are allowed to ask questions. I'm tired; I don't notice this. Ching and Frank do. The publisher is gracious, and I give him books. He cannot go to dinner with us, so he deputizes two American-educated young men. They escort us through the Night Market.

This is honky tonk; this is what Taipei calls the Green Light district; this is a rough place, but neat. But this is where they kill and serve snakes. I am phobic about snakes. Rob is delighted. She wants to see the snakes. I got on the damn plane. I have proved my guts. I don't have to look at snakes. I can quote Indiana Jones, and I do. I tell one of our yuppie guides, "I really hate snakes. Please walk by me and tell me when not to look."

This is no loss of face. Lots of people won't look.

We dodge the snake-stalls, go through a set of doors into a restaurant, duck out the back and into a smaller alley. Near it, up trots a dog carrying a stick. He wants Dwight to play with him: clearly, even a foreigner can appreciate a good dog. No time; we're late for dinner.

The restaurant is a riot! I recognize the tableware as Wedgwood. I recognize the silver as Cristofle, complete to the chopstick pattern. A card indicates that the entire table service **and** tables and chairs for eight cost NT\$900,000. Work it out—we were sitting on US\$36,000 worth of stuff. And below crystal chandeliers. The bathroom squirts perfume into the air. The walls are paneled with silk. There is a statue of Napoleon crossing the Alps there. And this transcendently vulgar, hilarious, joyous place is one of the finest fish restaurants in Taipei. Our hosts split us up: Americans on one side, Spanish on the other. Teresa's friends are honored by an extra dish; they have Business Contacts. Again, I'm too dumb to notice. Besides, I'm playing Do You Know with the host sitting next to me. He used to teach at Brown. We turn out to have people in common.

No menu, dammit, but shark's fin soup appears. So does half a lobster. I think we have to leave too soon, but Ching and Frank are Not Pleased. What I've missed is that in talking to me of himself, my host has not drawn out the guests. And someone flamed Ching: was she there to swipe their writing markets? Dumb, Shwartz, dumb!

"But they seemed to like me!" I protest.

"What's not to like," Frank tells me. Dwight nods solemnly.

Apparently, these 30-something gentlemen left the States because they didn't feel well-treated. I



shrug. My host had his Ph.D. from Princeton on scholarship. He was an assistant professor at Brown. Sounds good to me....

Face. Damn. You be aggressive, Ching tells me.

Okay. I promise aggression, but, frankly, sleep sounds better.

Anyhow, I had a good time. And I wake up in the middle of the night, thinking of my jade (it's in my mind now, so it's mine!), and I cry again at its beauty.

The next morning, we are told to be ready early. Cat-herding in action: we're not. I do some more shopping and am still ready on time. The Spanish gentlemen are milling about. One breaks from the group and wanders blandly in the direction of away. Another is in the bathroom. Mr. Fu, need I say it, is hysterical. We just want to go. Teresa, and I need not say this either, isn't helping. She's playing with her boyfriend, a mustachioed guy who'd be pleasant if he weren't attached to her. Rob is speaking Spanish with adequate fluency but little style. The writers seem charmed. I wish I could understand better.

We are driven to another place, the literary home of *Unitas*, a journal. It is published by Paula P. C. Wang, who asks Rob if she knows Amy Tan's agent. Curtis represents Janet Dailey. Ms. Wang (very much the type to be Ms. —lean, elegant and fierce) says, "Oh, isn't she a romance writer?" I feel right at home!

To my surprise, Ms. Wang greets me with respect. She's heard of me. Isn't that nice? It surprises Teresa, who's been trying to herd the Honored Hosts away from the Americans. More face wars. We go into an elevator and I try to wave the senior-most of the women, a Manchu lady, Professor Emerita Pang-Yuan Chi, ahead of me. She puts a hand on my arm. It is frail, but utterly authoritative. "You are my guest," she commands me. I get in. Fast. She reminds me of the great ladies of the past couple of generations who taught at women's colleges. If she survived the exodus from Manchuria to hold a position as full professor at Taiwan's greatest university...oh, I know just what she's like.

We meet a variety of other professors. Two are Early American specialists. One has a subspecialty in Confucius. I ask if they still read Perry Miller and mention that I studied with his student, Alan Heimert. Turns out that Heimert lectured for them in Taiwan. I screw up on a quote but, "What do you expect from a medievalist?" I ask. They buy that: I'm not surprised.

One of them is very nervous. The next day, he is returning to the mainland for the first time in 45 years (he left at age 12, as a military servant to an

officer). He will see his brother, who is a farmer, take pictures, hug him and cry a lot. If it reassures him to think of me as a shy little Emily Dickinson, it's sexist, but I can deal with it.

I can also have some fun. "How can I redeem myself and my courage in your eyes?" I ask over the soup, which, blessedly, is **not** shark's fin. (Lunch is huge, but less formal than it's been.) "I shall be the first to speak," I say.

They agree. They think I'm going to stammer something out. You and I know better. I've got the thing written down.

Soon, I'll type it out.

You have been warned.

Now, leading up to that speech...though it's late right now, we are led into a conference room that might have held an audience of 25–50 at a convention. "You'll have to speak up," I am told.

Teresa advances the amiable suggestion that the Americans could sit and listen and be briefed later. Do I understand? she asks me with a glittery smile. "Even Americans understand," I say, looking her up and down.

I look about the room, gauging it. Stand up. Sit down. I have my range. A professor Xavier Chen sits next to me: law school prof type and, judging from the name, a Jesuit. I have no problem at all, just waiting to speak.

I am introduced (oddly, thanks to Mr. Fu's never passing on the formal biodata). I stand up, bow and begin:

I am honored and delighted to be your guest and your student in the unforgettable experience of my trip to Taiwan.

You have asked me to speak on a subject dear to my heart: the past, present and future of my craft, which is the writing of historical fantasy and science fiction. It is especially appropriate to note here the debt of appreciation the writers of the science fiction community bear to you. Among the writers we admire in our community is Dr. Paul Anthony Linebarger, late of Johns Hopkins University, who wrote under the name Cordwainer Smith and was admired for his style and his humanity. He was a godson of Dr. Sun Yat-sen.

Let me speak, first, of the past of science fiction. When we include fantasy, the community of writers of which I am a part claims a vast and noble tradition—from the god-stories of Egypt and India, the stories of Isis and Osiris and of the Mahabharata; the works of Plato and Homer of the Western classical tradition; and stories such as your own *Journey to the West* and the younger tradition of the European middle ages, such as the stories of the Norse and the Celts. We like to believe we study myth, art and history as well as science.

Well, we try.

In the most recent version of science fiction—that part of the tradition beginning with Jules Verne and H.

G Wells and continuing into the 20th century "pulp" magazines with the wild pictures of aliens, spacemen and exotic ladies on their covers—science fiction calls itself a literature of ideas, primarily scientific ideas. Much of this science fiction, pioneered by Hugo Gernsback, was written to inspire American boys to seek careers in science. The number of scientists and engineers who joined the U.S. space program and said they were inspired by science fiction may say we have had some success. We would, of course, like more. And it is dear to our hearts to reach out and contribute to other people's ambitions like this, while learning what they have to teach.

We have, occasionally, gotten it right. Arthur C. Clarke, living in retirement as a "human treasure" in Sri Lanka, wrote about communication satellites long before rockets (aside from those in the fiction of Verne or Wells) existed powerful enough to hurl them into orbit. The late Dr Isaac Asimov took Karel Capek's term "robot" and coined the term "robotics," a science that will revolutionize factories worldwide. And Mr. Robert Heinlein commented on Apollo missions on worldwide television. He dreamed them; and it became his privilege to interpret them to generations of readers. My own teacher Ms. Andre Norton is the first woman to become a science fiction grandmaster. I am obliged to her lifelong interest in China, which sparked a similar interest in me and contributed to at least two books so far.

This is our past. Our present is to continue as we have begun—as custodians, explorers and interpreters of a culture that is moving far more rapidly than, perhaps, readers are fully happy with. Both technologies and moral values seem to be on the march.

Let me explain. In my own work, I have progressed from writing with pen and paper (though that is how I have written this speech) to using a 486 25-megahertz personal computer. I gather that, although it is only a year old, my computer is already obsolete, so rapidly has technology advanced. On my "old" computer, I can write and store information. A few keystrokes will send my work across a continent. A few more will enable me to talk to writers and readers across the world. Vice President Gore's "information superhighway" has long been the road on which my community and I "commute" to work.

In my actual writing, I use history and technology to come to grips with human problems while telling the best story I can for a market that increasingly demands that books be commercially viable. For example, I am writing about the 11th-century Byzantines, about a young soldier who has lost his will to fight, questions his religion and tries to build a community in which all the peoples in his land can live and grow. From the lessons of Vietnam, we know this man's problem has a name: post-traumatic stress disorder. The lessons I am using are those drawn not only from history books but also from the more personal ones of our own time, where we see wars and religion and prejudice and ask why these things must be. I hope that as I mature as a person and a writer, I will be able to do this better. That is my

future.

Now, how do I see the future of my field? We have a saying: Even a broken clock—the old-fashioned, not the digital variety—will tell the correct time twice a day. Accordingly, here are my two predictions:

**Science fiction will remain the same** in terms of its fascination with history and science, its emphasis on story and character and its mission to explain their world to readers.

**Science fiction will grow and change.** Using the computers that are our servants as inspirations, we will learn new ways of telling stories, perhaps through hypertext, using pictures and music as well as words. The forms of publishing will increase. There will be books such as we have now. There will also be more disks, more games, more chances to let readers participate and become first co-creators, then independent creators. But above all, wherever there are people and problems and ideas, there will be science fiction writers telling stories. We promise always to ask "what if" and to worry about what will happen "if this goes on" and to share the joy we find in our studies of when things go right.

I have found such joy and excitement in my trip to the Republic of China. And for that, I thank you and promise to do my best to let my work reflect it.

Thank you.

<bow and sit down>

What they made of the speech I don't know.

It's not traditional academic discourse. It used some technical language that probably exceeded humanities scholars' language capabilities, superb as they are in Taiwan. Teresa refused to translate...she hadn't put in for English/Spanish and, in any case, she couldn't handle academic speech of any kind. Those who understood—the youngest Spanish scholar, the Chinese scholar (educated in Illinois) sitting beside me, a few others and my own group—said it worked. It will be translated, too.

But what I was doing as the speeches went on—with Professor Chi speaking of her history and of women writing, Professor Abeillan speaking of the high humanities, Professor Chen speaking of Confucius and order in Madrid-accented Spanish—was making a very strong ritual statement: here is a youngish American woman who has gotten up and spoken *first* as a sign of courage. She has spoken confidently and clearly and eloquently. Her language was complex. Her manner was respectful. This is important for you to see. And her group agrees.

We have, of course, the Spanish/English problem. Rob steps in with her rough-and-ready Spanish, and I help with cognates. Rob performs magnificently, and I hope people know it. I turn to Professor Chen. "You know, sir," I say, "what you are seeing is quintessentially American. We are

confronted with a problem for which we are by and large not prepared. But we jump in and as a group, keeping our sense of humor, we work things out."

He sees, he says. They all see. It is more important than face, and that versatility and flexibility are scary as hell to a more rigid culture. Note, too, that it comes from the youngest of the group.

Afterwards, they present books to us and we present our gifts to them. More books, on my part. To Professor Chi, I say, "These are the works of a woman writing." The woman on the cover of *Imperial Lady* looks Manchu. The Spanish gentlemen are impressed to know it has been translated into Spanish.

After that meeting we go on to another newspaper, for which Yun Ching has written since she was 11. She is greeted with great honor and her face is repaired, a fact she lets people know about. The young women rising in the newsroom watch her the way a neopro would look at Ursula Le Guin. She doesn't notice, but I do; and they glow when they have their pictures taken with her.

And we have another banquet. Do we have shark's fin soup? Of course we do! Teresa's friends are told they aren't invited. Of course we ignore that... Teresa is offended. Her friends are not. We later find out—via Rob—that her girlfriend is a very nice sort of woman, six feet tall and blonde (which categorizes her as a raving beauty in Spain), uncharacteristically monoglot and cheerfully indifferent to Serious Literature. I wish we'd known.

The banquet goes on. And on. It is very pleasant, however, but Miss Lin calls twice and moves the curtain to later. We start the impressive parting & milling ritual. "Señores, per favore, vámanos!" I say. God knows how awful my accent is. We wind up in the newsroom. We fish the señores out of the bathroom or wherever they'd drifted off to; and we get onto the bus.

We have company: Miss Lin; Samuel Liu, chief of the Protocol Office for the Ministry of Education; and a very beautiful, poised young woman—star of the Chinese opera.

As we head toward the Gwo Guang Art School, Samuel (more humorous and overtly less face-ridden than the others) explains. Students enter the school at ages 7–9 after rigorous physical and mental testing. They study music, costuming, dance, singing; and after a time, pick a specialty. They graduate after nine years—plus completing the mandatory Taiwanese curriculum—and then owe the Armed Forces, which subsidized them, three years of service as performers. Opera performers also go into Taiwanese theater and the films.

He finishes his speech, turns to the singer and says, "Hit it, kid!" We laugh. She looks for a hal-

berd or something with which to hit, and he explains.

The principal of the school is waiting for us at the gate to the outermost courtyard, a broad, tiled area with a pond in the center. If you've seen the male lead in the Ingrid Bergman film *Inn of the Sixth Happiness*, you know how handsome he is. He is a former artist of the Opera. I find out the next day (more later) that he is also an Army colonel.

We are led to an exhibit of opera masks and makeup—ancient and carefully prescribed for each character—and of opera arms. Then we are led into a tiny theater with costumes and more weapons and another fan of Yun Ching, a pretty girl who stares at her wide-eyed. There are about 20 armchairs with brocaded cushions, each with a table and a covered cup of tea near to hand. The musicians in their gray scholars' gowns are waiting.

And I realize that this is a private command performance...all because I had begged to hear Chinese opera.

Ching pushes me into the center armchair in the first row. "This is for you," she tells me quickly as the lights dim. We are not to go to the Theater School because that's when we're to meet the Premier. Instead, we have this command performance. I am boggled. As always in Taipei, when my back rests against the back of a chair, my feet touch the ground: I like the scale of the place.

But never mind that: the lights are down; the *fu-chin*, drums, bells and gongs are starting up; and heel and toe, heel and toe in high buskins, a bearded teenager struts chanting onto the small stage.

Here is the story of "Yaochi Fairy" (translated from Chinese into English and Spanish):

Admiring the ordinary world, Yaochi Fairy managed to steal three treasures and left Yaochi for it. She lingered in the Tsuei village. The Jade Emperor sent Gold Mother to the ordinary world to bring Yaochi Fairy back to the heaven palace for punishment. Gold Mother's appearance caused a gods' war among Wukon, Nato and Yaochi Fairy.

Clearly, there is a literary (and libretto) tradition I'm missing.

Guess who doesn't care?

The Emperor wears a beard and a robe covered with vermillion *lungs*, or dragons; he carries a horsehair scepter. I begin to pick up conventions. Yaochi Fairy wears a dress of pastel petals, matching her face makeup, and a floating headdress that makes me realize just how good the Met's research on costume was for the Zeffirelli production of Puccini's *Turandot*. (Side note on *Turandot*: 11 times in the opera, a Chinese folk tune is adapted.

Plácido Domingo, singing to a 10,000-person audience in Taiwan, sang the folk tune in Chinese—along with a crying audience.)

But this is *my* opera. I'm enthralled by the new conventions, by the new sounds, the tremendous enthusiasm and the remote, contemplative faces of the musicians, the skill of the singer/dancers—and here comes Gold Mother! Played by a boy, Gold Mother is an acrobat! The character has the quality balletomanes call *ballon*: as Baryshnikov describes it, you go up into the air, pause and come down again after a while. Watch Taiwanese gymnasts in the Olympics; you'll see what I mean.

Subsidiary players mostly dance, waving long, long scarves about. Yaochi Fairy's "god's war" is wonderful—she *kicks* away spears hurled at her as she sings, head up, face impassive under the elaborate glittering paint, back straight and with those little feet shooting out precisely under the many-tiered skirt.

A glance tells me it's all right to take pictures. The Spanish gentlemen already are. They're also yelling bravo. So am I. My face *hurts*, I'm smiling so widely. I don't believe this. A baby opera...and because I wanted one. The program shows pictures of the performers—none of whom is more than 15.

After the performance, Señor Pavia beats me in a mad dash for the stage; I'm on my feet applauding, laughing and yelling. "Bravo! Bravo!" as I would at the Met. It's opera, isn't it?

Then I run up onstage. I hold out my hands to the performers. They aren't even winded and their makeup is still perfect. They're *kids*, for crying out loud, and we're keeping them up. They're smiling at us.

"Oh, you're wonderful. How can you be so wonderful?" I babble. They pull me into their midst for pictures. They are delighted, which surprises me and probably shouldn't. Foreigners come; they're roused out into performance before people who are wildly enthusiastic about them and who make much of them: they're kids! And so beautiful....

Principal Nai-Tung Chang gets our attention and holds up a gift bag. From it, he draws a huge book the size of a coffee table, bound in cloth and latched. It contains every one of the opera masks, beautiful plates on that heavy, glossy Chinese paper.

Ching stands up, hands flashing. This is *much* too fine a gift, she says. She isn't being modest and self-deprecating. I *know* what books like that are worth, and it's a tossup whether I'll bring mine home or donate it to the Met or Mount Holyoke right off the bat (not much of a tossup, though). I look in my tote. Yes, there is one book left: a copy

of *The Grail of Hearts*. Quickly, I inscribe it "to the Master of the Opera of the East, a tale of Opera from the West, with deepest gratitude" (write legibly, Susan, or at least try to make your signature an attractive glyph) and jab Protocol Chief Liu's arm. "Please, please translate for me now!"

Ching turns to me and I know she's going to suggest a gift. But I'm already standing before the Principal, bowing, holding out the book and a card in both hands, and thanking him as Samuel translates.

Frank checks out where the tumblers practice—he used to do that himself. I follow the performers somewhat blindly. But it is time to leave. At the gate to the outer court, the books and other gifts are handed out. A spare package is prepared for Señor Abeillan, who had to back to the hotel, ill (actually, exhausted). Teresa connives spare gifts for her boyfriend. I get on the bus, still saying, "Oh my. Oh my."

Back at the Grand Hotel, the room boy has turned down my bed. I take a bath to relax myself. Ha. But I fall asleep anyhow and wake grinning. With pure joy.

April 1 on Taiwan is the birthday of Kwan Yin, goddess of mercy. It's *still* April Fool; and that about describes it.

At breakfast, Ching is happily describing what she plans to do with the principal of the Opera School...in a book!

"Good thing, baby," says Frank. "Or we're going home now." They've been together for more than 20 years now after a very hard time at first: "If Puccini knew us," Frank is fond of saying, "he wouldn't have had to write *Butterfly*."

I'm grinning. I pick up some of my purchases—I my chop, some earrings, the lapis and jade cats..."Where's your Chinese friend?" asks one shopkeeper. She's impressed to know what "my Chinese friend" has accomplished. Since a NT\$10 coin looks like a quarter, I get into difficulties that we laugh off. I present the quarter to the shopkeeper. She gives me an old-fashioned coin in return. A very dressed-up lady waiting to buy silk smiles benevolently.

We have a busy schedule today. Señor Abeillan is downstairs for breakfast; the night's sleep was what he needed. I go over and ask about his health—no one likes the idea of being sick in a country where you don't speak the language and where acupuncture (however beneficial it may be) is a treatment of choice.

Then the impressive Morning Milling ceremony commences. By the time we've lined up the Spaniards, Teresa has wandered off with her boyfriend. Ching gets furious and retreats to her room,

dragging Frank and Dwight with her. She will not come down until Mr. Fu, who arrives late and frantic, calls. Rob wanders off to take pictures. Dwight, Norma and I wait by the bus.

When the cats have finally all been herded onto the bus, we drive to the Confucius Temple. Miss Lin brings us informational brochures and helps me buy film. The temple is silent and respectful. Mr. Fu lights incense and bows. A file of school-boys comes in. The eldest whaps a younger one on the head. The boys line up, bow sharply and rise, their hands steeped before them. Confucius' birthday — much earlier — is a national holiday.

We pause to nod respect at various spirit tablets and icons.

Mr. Fu says it's manners to bow before gods' shrines. I'll nod greetings; the monotheist in me isn't quite sure that more is suitable — well, the monotheist in me is very sure that more is *unsuitable* for me.

We wind up in the Night Market in the daytime. The snake-stands are closed, thank God. We buy a sandalwood bead bracelet — worry beads or Buddhist prayers or what have you — for Richard Curtis. A file of Tibetan lamas emerges from a storefront temple. Beneath their yellow tunics and one-shoulder mulberry robes, they are wearing Italian wingtips; and vaccination marks show on their bare arms. "Where are you from?" "New York!" "Ah, very good!" And we are leafleted.

Kipling would have loved it.

We pick up the papers from the day before. We are in the Chinese-language dailies. Mr. Fu sees we all get copies. If Teresa does the same for the Spanish gentlemen, we don't see it. (Why don't I call Mr. Fu by his first name? Can't pronounce it. Frank and Ching have nicknamed him "Sean," which is what the second syllable sounds like.)

I have to confess it. I'm thirsty now. I'm not trying the fruit juices; we've been advised to be careful. There is a canned drink called *Sweat*, probably an electrolyte restorer. I don't think so. A Coke with white characters in Chinese on the red can? By all means, let's be a terrible, culture-bound American and pay the NT\$20 for it. It tastes wonderful. Dwight disappears into a McDonald's to take pictures for a friend in Escanaba who owns three Golden Arches. Dwight is taking lots of pictures and collecting lots of artifacts for his neighbors and his college, his students and his trustees. He's also contriving to enjoy himself; but for him, this trip is a definite mission to help the students of the Upper Peninsula in Michigan (it's snowing there; he can be pardoned for being smug about prowling about in shirtsleeves). I realize that I've missed people like Dwight; they're scarce in NYC.

Mr. Fu, waving his arms, loads us onto the bus. We're late for our meeting with the Ministry of Education. We pass the Handicrafts Center. A visit is promised for the afternoon. Sounds good to me.

At the Ministry, we see a film on Taiwanese education. Nine years is compulsory, and there is 99% compliance. Students are tracked into academic and technological programs. It looks good. Dwight is quivering with delight at all the statistical material. He asks for a second packet to send to Washington.

The lunch invitation is embossed in metallic red. We file back on the bus to get to the Howard Plaza Hotel. It's in a sort of luxury vertical mall: I see an incredible tropical florist and **I see T'ang Dynasty art for sale in an antique shop.** It leaves me almost gibbering.

Lunch is in a private VIP dining room. I could get used to private rooms. (In other private rooms, weddings go on. At the Lai Lai, Norma saw accountants dealing with the contents of "red envelopes," as in *The Wedding Banquet*. I'm topic-drifting. Back to the Howard Plaza.) This room is paneled in glossy reddish wood and decorated with calligraphy and those misty, rocky landscapes you think of when you think of scroll paintings. There is also some superb porcelain in cases. Packages are stacked on a mantel. Yes, I have my books in return. I see Professor Chi, apologizing earnestly to Ching, "We love America. Most of us studied there." I meet "Tony" Tien-en Kao, Ph.D., who is director of the AV Center of National Taiwan University and a professor of Foreign Languages and Literature there. He's teaching a course on Jewish-American writers and is glad to meet me. I give him a copy of *Graffiti of Hearts* and promise him *The Devil's Arithmetic*. He apologizes for the cold that kept him from yesterday's meeting.

We are served lunch. The revolving table on top of the regular table is electronically controlled. Neat. I am seated honorably near to Yu Yuh-chao, director of the Bureau of Cultural and Educational Relations of the Ministry of Education. I suggest that, seeing that Dwight is a university professor, we should switch seats. This idea is well-received, especially by Dwight.

The menu arrives and (sorry, Dwight) I acquire it:

Assorted suckling pork delicacies

Braised baby abalone

Fried clam

Double-boiled shark's fin soup (again!). It arrives in black handled bowls atop salt soaked in aromatic spirits and set afire. For the first time in recorded history, I am literally afraid of my lunch.

Steamed fresh fish

Baked lobster with ginger  
 Braised bamboo pith rolls with vegetables  
 Baked pork cake  
 Fancy Cantonese dessert (a warm, dark, sweet soup  
 that is basically sesame-flavored cream)  
 Mixed fresh fruit platter

And tea. And rice wine to go *Ganbai!* with.  
 Next rock.

Dwight is busy with the Minister. Norma is on my other side. Beyond her is Samuel Liu. Beyond him is Tony Kao. I get people into a discussion of the opera we saw last night and the children's training. Apparently, they are tested and retested in case they lose interest or can't handle the specialized training.

Somehow it emerges that Samuel thinks Jews are a Protestant group. There is a rapid-fire exchange and we wind up discussing Sabbati Zvi, a false Messiah from about the 16th or 17th century. (He wound up as a Muslim, by the way.) Professor Kao is interested in the question of whether the grand rebbe Menachem Schneerson is the Messiah. It leaves you very perplexed, he said. Perplexed is bad, clearly.

Well, I point out, Maimonides wrote a *Guide to the Perplexed*, didn't he? After 6,000 years, we're used to it. It is comfortable to have my own 6,000-year-old tradition here in China.

The conversation shifts. We are now discussing which Christian saints could be called bodhisattvas. St. George, perhaps: not all bodhisattvas are peaceful. St. Francis of Assisi, without a doubt. I am awfully thankful for a weird education.

After lunch (and toasts), the deputy minister rises. He is so touched, he says, that he wants to sing us a song about friendship. His voice is quite good. Ching sings in return. She has a lovely trained soprano. Teresa has an urgent need to go to the restroom.

Señor de Lara is asked to say a few words. Then Dr. Shwartz is called on. "Dwight?" murmurs Norma. I think of yielding gracefully, then recall that a woman who gives up the right to have an opinion is seldom asked a second time.

I stand up promptly and thank everyone. I mention that I was very sorry when I left teaching; but had I stayed in, I would never have had this privilege. Education, after all, has many faces.

The minister wants to know why I left teaching. (Oh my God, does he think I was there under false pretenses?) I explain that I had no vocation for the contemplative life, and that seems to be okay.

We are presented gifts. We present gifts. In the bus, I open mine. It is a splendidly supple silk scarf in the white, blue and burgundy of the flag of Taiwan, with white Chinese characters and a bit of

gold/taupe trim.

The men have ties.

And we have a Surprise. Turns out we are not to go to the Handicrafts Center after all. Teresa has told the Spanish gentlemen, but not us, that there is a special briefing at the first newspaper (the nasty one). All of the Americans, except Rob, decide to sit it out. We wander the streets, into an anti-government bookstore, into a shoe shop, past the almost fortress-like walls of private homes, past open-air restaurants and away from mopeds. We find the driver. He calls Mr. Fu.

Finally, the Spanish gentlemen mill downstairs. No Mr. Fu. No Teresa. You should have come, Rob says. It was in English, and the Spanish men wouldn't go through their honoring-ceremony (they have books and medals to present). They were angry. Mr. Fu is angry. Ching is angry. Teresa is smug. This is the publisher's private foundation, and she has managed to introduce her boyfriend to him and recommend his business. Mr. Fu and Ching get into it in loud Chinese. He starts pointing his finger in her face.

She gets off the bus. Frank follows. (It's either that or punch Fu in the face, we suspect.) We follow.

We take a cab back to the hotel. Things do not look happy. Strangely enough, as we draw up, we're right behind the bus.

Ching is nowhere in sight. Dwight retreats quickly: Midwesterners dislike this sort of Flap. Fu and Teresa are disputing something. Rob takes her camera in the direction of away, anywhere away.

I find myself surrounded by five or six Spanish gentlemen who are upset by the sight of female verbal violence. Not to mention Mr. Fu. What is going on? they want to know.

Why me?

Because you're *here*, idiot, the voice inside my head tells me. The crisis is here. We have a dinner tonight. We have an audience with the Premier coming up. We have Ching, furious. And I've got six spooked Spaniards.

I find myself quite composed. My back feels very straight, and abruptly, I realize I am quite up to the job at hand.

"We are very upset," I tell the señores. "We went back to that paper. We were not told of this. We have not been told of many things. I don't like that. And that paper treated us poorly because we are Americans. That is not acceptable."

They explain it was a foundation. I repeat: We were not told.

Why is Ching angry with Mr. Fu? I let my eyes widen with indignation, but not too much; I want to stay cool-looking. "He shouted at her as if she

were a thing with bound feet," I tell them. "It was rude."

Mr. Fu utters a snarl of rapid syllables.

Teresa points to me.

I point to her. "She is not telling us things. She is playing games. Who is she and who are her friends? She is hired to translate and she acts as leader. She is not a writer. They are not writers or intellectuals."

The Spanish men nod.

"I don't like this," I tell them. "I am a New Yorker. What is she doing? I suspect—do you know the word 'scam'?"

They know it. It's what they suspect. They seem a whole lot more approachable now.

Teresa comes over. What is going on? What will happen if we miss dinner and the audience? Mr. Fu says (she tells me) that he will not pay our hotel bills.

"What are you doing?" I ask. "You were hired to translate. You are not this group's leader."

Will I at least come to the dinner?

"I will do what is appropriate. I can do *nothing* without the agreement of my group."

"You are behaving inappropriately," I tell her. "You are playing games and making threats. You are not our group's leader. Ching is our group's leader. We will do what is right after we talk about it. But you are behaving badly and I don't want to listen to you."

I walk off to get my key. I see that she's pounced on Norma, so I return. "I told you," I tell Teresa Tu, "it is improper of you to play games and try to split the American group. You are behaving badly."

Norma and I extricate ourselves. It's time to talk to Ching and past time. "If we pull out now," Norma mutters so Fu won't hear, "what will we do for two days?"

"It's Taipei. We'll find something." Like the Museum. Like the tour leaflets I've got in my room. No problem. I'm worried about the meeting with the Premier, but I know we'll be there; group squabbles will not affect that. Suddenly, again, I realize that I can ensure that. Not that I doubt Ching on the subject for a moment.

Mr. Fu follows us up to Ching and Frank's room.

"I wouldn't. Not yet," I tell him. We go in. We suspect him of eavesdropping.

Ching and Frank are upset. Frank is glad he didn't punch out Mr. Fu.

What do the Spanish gentlemen think? Ching wants to know.

"They know it's a scam. I explained it to them," I tell her.

You explained it?

Sure. They don't like to speak English because they think their English is bad. It's not. I got through.

After a while, Mr. Fu comes in. We all try to talk at once. Mr. Fu does tend to interrupt. Some of it is excitability. Some of it is the tendency of men to interrupt women. I demand time to talk and get it.

Ching asks me for Mr. Fu: Was I threatened? Who said he wouldn't pay the bill? I don't remember, I say. Fu's English isn't good enough. It must have been Teresa. Who told him that I said I had been threatened? I had, I say. But if you didn't say that, then she was lying to me. She's a liar.

Mr. Fu sees his job on the line. Miss Lin has already planned to complain of our treatment. Personally, except for Teresa the Spanish Dragon Lady, I have no problems. And I've taken care of her, to the extent I can.

I sort of vague out. When I return to myself, Frank is announcing that it is time to go to dinner. Given the upsets, all we need is another banquet. Nevertheless, we are headed for the opulent Grand Formosa Hotel for just that.

I find myself seated with Señor de Lara on the bus. He admires my presentation copy of *Imperial Lady*. He knows the name Andre Norton. I manage in English and my godawful French to explain that it's been published in Spain (now, we're trying to communicate in English, Spanish and French. Even Teresa's friend Maria Rosa tries with gestures. I admire her clothes, too.) Señor de Lara admires the writer's imagination. He looks at the book and I realize that he reads English for scholarship as I read Spanish. We smile over that. He asks what I think has happened. I tell him I thought we needed a good fight.

He is small, tired, gray and wide looking. His tired, cynical eyes flicker. He agrees.

No one says another word about the Incident. All I can say—well, not quite "all"—is thank God for the language difficulties, which forced decorum on me. Otherwise, I was definitely feeling a New York attack coming on. Which would have taken the form of a hands-on-hips stance and a yowl of, "Who is this babe and why's she got Mr. Fu by the short hairs?" I finally get Frank to translate some of that for Mr. Fu's private benefit, however, and feel much better.

The days are blurring one into the other. I'll probably have to compress some things. I remember dinners for which I have menus; for the rest, assume huge Western-style breakfasts, shark's fin soup and fruit *ad libitum*. Great as the food is, I'm beginning to pine for lettuce, which is a thing I thought I'd never say.



We are making friends with the Spanish gentlemen somehow. They sing, you see; and they have good voices. They started this at the *Unitas* offices, singing a Madrid student song. Later, they went on to Gregorian chant; and we had a weird discussion about Moorish influence in chant, Ladino music, etc. In about three languages.

That's not as much a digression as you could imagine. They are singing as we pull up in front of the Grand Formosa. Located in the center of town, it is as modern as the Grand Hotel is deliberately archaic. The Grand Hotel belongs to a vanished tradition of steamer trunks and generals; the Grand Formosa is for international travelers. The Grand Hotel is proudly Chinese and looks back into history; the Grand Formosa is in that pale gray and lavender and white style that looks like the Snow Queen's Hall, with Chinese accents. It is, people say, probably one of the best places for food in Taipei, if by food you mean banquets.

We walk up some slippery corridors, past the Western-style piano restaurant in the atrium (Amex's platinum card lists this hotel, the only one in Taiwan) and into a private dining room. One of Ching's friends, a novelist from Taipei, is there, wearing a black velvet cape and a modest purple satin Chinese gown. She greets me and I gather I've been discussed: she thought I'd like to see how Chinese clothes looked. She is stunning. Unfortunately, I don't get to sit next to her; I'm seated near the host, and the host has *Ganbai* on the brain.

Like most of the Chinese gentlemen, he has children in the United States (one man had a son studying the *Western* classics; and, "Tell me, Dr. Schwartz, what can a boy do with a degree in Greek?" Go into law, I suggested. Odd advice for a boy at Reed, but what the hell.). This man is extremely Americanized, to the point of owning a house in California. He has chosen the menu himself, and it's a lulu—as nice as the flowers on the vast round table—huge calla lilies and orchids about the same size in a free-form design.

Cold meat combination (avoid the pig's ear and the eel; the other stuff is great)

Sautéed seafood in golden cup (could have been twice as big)

Braised shark's fin with shredded chicken

Sliced abalone with vegetable

Grilled lamb chop chef special (the host was especially proud of this)

Steamed fresh fish

Braised *e-lu* noodle (I forget what it was, but it was great)

Sweetened red bean cream with lotus seed

Sweet paste

Fruit

Rob is seated by a man who's head of Foreign Languages at Taiwan National. I think he went to Stanford. He's a Shakespearean and also runs a literary magazine. He's looking for English stories to have translated into Chinese. "What's the rate?" Rob asks. Blank incomprehension. She manifests as Speaker-For-Richard and tells me to send 'em anyhow.

I tell him I'm a medievalist. He wants a medievalist: no money in the budget. Check the Internet, I suggest. He thinks that's a good idea.

Meanwhile the *Ganbais* are starting. We're all a little manic after the fight (and I am glad not to have missed this dinner). The Spanish gentlemen start singing. They sing "La Paloma" for me. Ching then sings once again at the request of the host; and Teresa once again has to go to the bathroom right then.

It goes around the table. When it comes to me, I sing three verses of "Where Have All the Flowers Gone." The chairman asks what happened to the other verses; but the song was getting long.

It's like speaking. I'm no longer too embarrassed to sing in public.

It's a pleasant evening and breaks up too soon. The bus takes the Americans back to the hotel. The Spanish men are going to the Night Market. We snicker at them. And we stop off at a private gallery in a walled house before we go back to our mountain retreat. It's run by a couple and a thin man named Milo who wears a beret. We take off our shoes and pad around in straw slippers on the tatami. Very comfortable.

As we're wriggling our toes and drinking smoky tea in gratifyingly large mugs (tea at the banquets is served in small decorous shells at the end of the meal), someone tosses two... well, I don't know at first what they are, besides sleeve-shaped things of pink and orange heavy satin, onto the table. Rob and I each pick one up.

They are boots, and the feet they are designed to fit are not longer than the width of my hand; and my hand is small. They are boots for bound feet. The boots are wide—I imagine that the flesh swelled out around the useless feet. I pick one up to examine it. The soles are of coarse yarn, widely stitched. A princess wearing dancing slippers as coarse as these could dance holes in them before the night is through. The lady who would wear *this* boot would not dance at all. Could not.

Rob and I are practically in tears.

We hand back the boots like relics of torture, which is what they are. Those poor girls. The toes are bound under the feet when the girls are young. The bones break; after a while, the necrotic flesh probably sloughs off. And the remaining, useless

foot is hidden in heavy satin.

Meanwhile, Frank and Dwight are dressing up in Emperors' robes about a century old. Dwight adds a jeweled hat and fan and scroll. "*Wan sui!*" Milo hails him. May you live ten thousand years! And he sketches a very graceful kowtow. Dwight swears he's putting that shot in his office.

Milo has many artifacts from the aborigines. He shows us the tremendously hard wood that gets inlaid with mother-of-pearl. There is a litter (very intricately carved) in the courtyard.

Each of us receives a piece of calligraphy about a century old.

Then it is time to go home again.

And the jet lag feels like a kick to the side of the head, followed by being smothered in a barrel of feathers.

It's about Friday now. By this time, we can see the point at which we're actually going to have to pack and go home. So the time is flowing. One morning, we are taken over to the Lung Shan temple, which as its name would imply is *crawling* with dragons. We prowl it beneath the bobbing yellow lanterns left over from Kwan Yin's birthday parties. In a corner between two shrines, a woman is crouched in the dark, telling her rosary. A number of women of all ages wearing black robes prostrate themselves. They're not nuns, not novices, but postulants at the very beginning of a religious vocation. As with the early Church, it's not unusual for an older woman, her family gone, to become a Buddhist nun. One woman takes off her robe. She is wearing jeans and a T-shirt.

Another prostrates herself before a table containing images, fruits, incense, candles and flowers. She kneels on a very ecclesiastic-looking kneeler. Before her, on a ledge beneath the table, is a large gray and white cat, sitting in Egyptian temple-cat position. It raises an annoyed paw at Señor Porpetta, who wants to pet it. "Not a good idea," I tell him. It ignores me.

And then it is Saturday morning.

Ching has acquired an official black car. In it she, Frank and Norma prowl to publishers. It's Dr. Huang's car; to give it up would imply loss of face. So our group is split. It's weird, and Norma's uncomfortable about it. We get to know the Spanish people better; and Teresa has stopped translating. Rob steps in, sort of.

They've taken off in the car and will meet us Saturday morning at the Government Information Office. Beyond that, no one knows what's going on. Except for the Tiger Problem. All week, we've been seeing stories about endangered species—not to mention a *Time* cover story. We've seen the minister of agriculture saying that people who use

tiger parts are nuts and no one in his family does, then eating his words. We've seen articles. I had that conversation with Dr. Huang about the minke whales.

Saturday morning, sure enough, there's an article about trade sanctions against Taiwan. I let out a wail. We are supposed to meet the Premier this morning. Things are bound to be...well...interesting.

And I don't for a minute suppose that Teresa wouldn't be overjoyed to let us miss the meeting and blame it on terrible Americans. My strategy, expressed to the other Americans: find a Spanish gentleman and stick close.

Naturally, Rob goes walkabout just as we're boarding the bus—dressed in our finest (and most uncomfortable) clothes. For me, that's my most formal navy Wall Street suit, pearls, pumps (red) and the scarf I got at the Ministry of Education. I was going to wear a blue Hermes scarf to annoy Teresa who will surely recognize it, but courtesy takes precedence over spite.

Rob arrives at the last moment. "I'm still early," she protests.

Tough. We move onto the bus and into Taiwan's horrible traffic.

We're unloaded at the GIO. The man who greets us (along with Sam) has a German name: he's studied there. He is nervous; the Premier is Serious Stuff. This isn't the first head of state I've met (I met Ozal of Turkey), and my friends have met Clinton. Dwight has D.C. experience. We're cool, right?

Yeah, sure.

They gesture us into a room where an "office flower" serves tea. What she thinks of the American women, I don't know. Teresa is swanning about looking. I'll admit, magnificent in a long, traditional blue Chinese dress piped in burgundy (someone else had my idea) and slit up to *there* more or less inappropriately.

Frank materializes. "Hey, she's got a run in her stocking, a big one," he mutters to me. I don't even snicker. I do make a nasty crack about karma.

"I thought she was an ambassador's wife, but she's only a translator," his driver has said. Meow.

We're taken into an auditorium. There are place cards on chairs. I find mine and sit down. Exercise: Keep spine straight and expression of intelligent attention on made-up face. Role model: Nancy Reagan, without...that's "without" the schmalztz.

Cameras precede the announcement of the Premier. We stand up; he enters, walks through the camera barrage and sits down. When his backside touches his chair, I sit down. That's what the Hornblower novels say to do, anyhow....

The Spanish are called on first and ask intelligent questions about education and cooperation à la U.S.A. and Taiwan. Señor Abeillan notes that time is short, a signal that it's time to go to us, right?

Wrong. The Premier rises and signals for aides to bring us our gifts.

I think this is a Diplomatic Snub. He's seriously ticked at the United States, or has to appear to be. Dwight and I flash looks at each other. This is seriously interesting. The Memsahib whispers in my ear that it's an honor to take the rap for your country; and when the maharajah gets ticked, you stand or sit at attention and look bland: it's no disgrace for the Taiwanese to see quiet and courteous Americans.

Premier Lien Chan smiles when he receives our gifts, especially the books from Ching and me. He shakes hands with that cold fish grip that officials use if they don't want to get their fingers crushed. The smile switches off. The cameras flash.

"Don't open it *here*, Susan," Ching whispers. (She knows me.)

He leaves; out we go and into the bus; and the Spanish gentlemen are having fits that we'll think they set it up. Hardly. After 6,000 years, the Chinese are surely skilled enough at protocol games to give us lessons and then some.

Personally, I think it's a riot. It has nothing to do with us. Lien Chan got his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago, and the translator who squatted near him and who sees us out cheerfully admits to being a Texas Aggie.

This is Politics, and a bunch of writers got caught in it. "Hey," I announce cheerfully, "never thought I'd get high enough to be hassled."

Ching is certain she's a failure. I tell her the one about my Uncle Jack and the picture that went to Moscow over Eisenhower's protests. "I paint," said General and President Eisenhower, incensed by Jack Levine's satire of a fat general, dowagers and hangers-on called "Welcome Home" (Uncle Jack hated the Army), "and Mr. Levine's painting is not Art but a Lampoon." And all the Russians showed up to see the painting that went to Moscow in the mid-1950s over the protest of a president. Even Khrushchev commented on that. ("Hey," said Uncle Jack, "when you've been blasted by a president, it means you've arrived. As a painter, he ought to stick to being president.")

It seems to help. So does going back to the bus and taking off monkey suits.

We are on our own for lunch. We want to check out the Ming Court in the arcade. Closed. The Tea House is open, and we find out that we don't know how to order buns. They keep coming and coming and coming. A God-help-us 10-course

tea house snack. The waiter is delighted. The other patrons are in spasms. Dwight eats it all contentedly and methodically. Cost NT\$100 apiece, which isn't bad. No shark's fin soup.

Then we get *back* on the bus. Traffic, in a word, is nightmarish.

But we arrive at a tea house—all paneled in cherry wood or maple. We sit on comfortable low chairs and are served tea, made a cup at a time. Each of us has two cups—one for inhaling and one for sniffing. They are a pale green: celadon. Very frail. I try to imitate Ching's grace with them. There are salted plums on the table. Better not try them in case I can't down one and have to get rid of it.

There are scrolls and calligraphy on the walls. The artwork is boldly brushed and colored: revolutionary.

Finally, Chen Shou-chen emerges in a black velvet Pre-Raphaelite gown with wrist ruffles. She has founded an early music institute for the performance of Nankuan music—and when I say *early*, I mean easily Han Dynasty, with roots going back to the Chou Dynasty (right after the Shang Dynasty). The Han Tang Institute has records of the music—I mean scrolls—and pictures of the instruments.

So, we see the *'p'ip'a*, which looks very much like a lute, but has no official connection; the *p'ai'p'an*, which is a set of five sandalwood blocks and a tassel, used to keep time; something called an *erh-hsie*, which looks like a *hu-chin* but isn't; a pipe; and other early instruments. The music is haunting and plaintive. The one male performer wears slippers and a gray scholar's gown. The women are beautiful and remote, with faces like the ladies on porcelain plates: mist and whiteness and delicate eyebrows.

The tea is fragrant.

And the streets of Taipei are one hell of a contrast.

I put on my party dress once again. After the constraints of the business suit, the knit and chiffon combination feels delightful. But I'm tired. Frank's ill. Dwight is hauled off the bus because Ching in all her 50-something years has never gone to a restaurant by herself without a male escort and she's weirding out. Hell, when she was a kid, she was sent to movies with maids to sit on either side of her so no one would brush her arm. Culture shock: and she has to work on it, she sees, after seeing Rob and me deal happily with the Face Wars. We're *used* to uncivil treatment, so much so we don't notice it.

I harbor faint hopes of going back to the Grand Formosa. Oh well. We're at the Sherwood this evening, another five-plum-blossom place. As befits

its name (before urban renewal stalked Sherwood Forest), it has lots of English features, notably the flora still lives that the local tourists painstakingly study.

We are ushered into a private dining room. There are not enough seats at the table. Dr. Huang isn't coming: hmmm, another snub? Nah... poor man's been sick. Mr. Fu's wife and kids aren't there, and we were sort of hoping. Not enough room. But Teresa's waved her buddies to seats. Rob is talking publishing with someone. She turns to Maria Rosa, Teresa's girlfriend. Does she mind being left out of the conversation? Dazzling smile from Maria Rosa. She's in Taipei. She's with friends. She's being taken interesting places. She's very happy. I wish I'd known her better. We exchange compliments on clothing, but that's the limit of it, given her lack of English and my lack of Spanish.

Mr. Fu is distressed. Dinner is at least NT\$1,200 per person—about US\$50. He suggests we hit the buffet instead. He is argued down by the manager of the private dining room, which is good; I'm reluctant to move. Jet lag, airplane-apprehension and everything else are catching up. I retreat to the ladies' room, where there is Mozart on the Mu-zak. Dinner includes—do you doubt it—shark's fin soup. We lose composure and giggle helplessly at it, even the Spanish gentlemen.

I am trying hard to get through dinner. But I am feeling woozy and gray. Finally, Ching grabs me. "I'm taking Susan home," she announces, "now."

People give me sympathetic arms to lean on. Outside, I realize that I really *am* unsteady on my (black-satin-shod) feet and I sit down on a wall. The car comes around and I am placed in the front seat. We go back to the Grand Hotel. I am too tired even to apologize, and that is pretty tired!

I lean on Dwight's arm. Norma takes me in tow. Up in my room, I break into tears and the shakes. Shortly thereafter, I fall asleep.

Tomorrow is Sunday. We are outta here in the evening.

On Sunday morning, I wake. No, I am not sick. They are not going to have to call a doctor who maybe doesn't speak English. I am not getting acupuncture. I am not missing my flight. And I am decidedly not going to be sick on Singapore Air.

(Which reminds me. Mr. Fu says that the next meeting of the conference is in Singapore, and we're all invited. Sure.)

But I have gained enlightenment as I slept, which is one that the Buddha would probably like. The reason I felt as if I were flying *between* times is simple: culture shock. I've been trying to figure out

undercurrents, and that's tiring.

I start to pack. When I return to the room after breakfast, I see that the room boy has found a Ferragamo I missed. Damn. I have arranged with the front desk to prorate the room, meaning I get to keep it till it's time to go.

Rob and Dwight and I get together. We're going to climb the mountain behind the hotel. But first, some last shopping. We make our purchases (a bracelet for Renée, my pet boutique owner; other stuff for the others) and Dwight goes to get his camera. A German family comes by. They speak English, but I say something *auf Deutsch* and they do a double-take. They do a second double-take when they find out I'm from New York; they're from Hamburg and, like all people from Hamburg, they are *sticklers*. My vocabulary is limited. My grammar is rotten. But apparently, I have an exceedingly classy German accent. I've heard this before, from a German grad student at Harvard. Suspicion: all the old Germanic stuff like Old and Middle English, Mittelhochdeutsch and Old Norse. I forget the word for Dragon—meaning the one in the fountain. When I'm reminded of it, we make sick Wagner jokes. Mme. Chiang Kai-shek may never know it, but we've dubbed the fountain-dragon Fafnir. The Germans live and work in Tokyo. Oops. I keep my face expressionless. After all, I've sold a book to both countries....

They take off. Dwight arrives. We climb the mountain. There are about 30 temples on it, including the one to the trickster monkey god. People are playing badminton, doing karaoke, playing marbles (badly) and dancing. "Archaic Western dances," says Rob.

Crud. It's the American waltz. I can do that. I don't, however.

We return to the hotel for something to drink and, later, lunch. The Spanish gentlemen are milling. Teresa is hanging out with her friends. Rob tells me that after we left, Teresa said she wouldn't translate Ching's words into Spanish because they were "unacceptable." So she was listening to me, the minx. Rob turned her back. The Spanish gentlemen looked grave and were very quiet when Teresa hinted she'd like to be asked to visit Spain.

We by contrast *have* been invited. By Professor Abeillan. Even Sr. Javeloyas has given us the name of one of his sons, a journalist in NYC; he wants Rob and me to meet him, don't know why.

Teresa has arranged for our wonderful bus driver to take the Spanish gentlemen to Chiang Kai-shek International Airport. We finagle the Official Black Car.

Rob thinks I'm nuts, but I'm still playing face games. He's not a cab; he's official: not nice to tip

him. But he *can* accept a gift. I give him US\$20—half the cab fare.

We visit the Spanish gentlemen at China Air and wait for Singapore. I fight off a gentleman who insists I get one of his bags through on my allowance. "My government won't let me," I say repeatedly. Someone examines his stuff and takes it through.

There is no water I want to drink. I take my Xanax dry. I get on the plane and flake out. The flight attendant wakes me. Yes, I want prawns. The Korean gentleman beside me plans to sleep, but then sees the prawns and wants some. He recommends I stay up to see *Age of Innocence*. Politely, I do so. It is very Chinese. It's also a damn fine film.

We have three hours in LA. We go through

Customs, or at least I do.

TWA gives us an upgrade, a remarkably stupid movie in Business Class (my legs ache from the mountain, so it's probably good I didn't waltz with Taiwanese...no, that's not a multicultural sequel to *Dances With Wolves*) and a roast beef sandwich with red wine. At 6 a.m. (in recrossing the International Date Line, I've forgotten Daylight Savings Time), we land in New York.

"Dear Earth," as Richard II says, "I do salute thee with my hand." I grab a cart (US\$2), load my stuff onto it and grab a cab. Not much later, I am home. Not much later than that, I've logged on to GEnie, my online service, to announce the fact. I unplug the phone and achieve unconsciousness.



## In Lieu of a Lettercolumn

I have lots of letters which should go here, but given what page I am on at present, I am forgoing the full lettercolumn this issue. It will appear in the next *Lan's Lantern*. I will answer a few letters from "way back" and put together the WAHF list. --Lan

Roger Sheppard, 117 Kent House Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1JJ ENGLAND

Many thanks for sending me *Lan's Lantern*. What Energy! Any of your occupations as teacher, filker, fanzine publisher, writer of ramblings, would finish me off. You come over as some kind of scary Golum in overdrive. That sounds a bit rude, but you get my drift.

Just back from the Pellaopone, place called Stoupa on the way down to the Mani. Many things here—including the people—remind me of Crete and the Cretans, but not really rough enough or dry enough for Crete, and the men don't dance. In Stoupa they have Ouzo, but I didn't see Raki. (On Crete, you go with your bottle to the guy who runs the filling station (one pump) and he goes out the back and returns with a fiery spirit to take your lid off.; costs 250 drachmas—say all of 70 pence or \$1— which will actually kill you if you put the lot down...but it will keep you pissed for a week at 15¢ per day.) Perhaps Stoupa was too refined for me. I must say the food was great: normally Greek food is just Souvlaka and a Greef Salad, but they had really good Barbouni and other fish, as you may know, the Greeks have fished out their waters and have to go deep sea not for their catches.

I really liked your fanzine listing in #41, and I have written for the Juvenile Books listing you mentioned. The reviews are good...I have my notes for my next visit to town...

*I think you will enjoy Ben Indick's travelogue to Greece—you can make some comparisons. People tell me I do an awful lot with my various activities. I would agree; I don't like to be idle....*

Taras Wolansky, 100 Montgomery St., #24-H, Jersey City, NJ, 07302 USA

Marian Skupski's "Evolution and the Human Race" was particularly interesting, at least to an old molecular biology buff like me. I wonder, though, if she's right about natural selection for higher intelligence no longer occurring in the human population. For one thing, mentally retarded people—in particular, mentally retarded men—are less likely to reproduce. Intelligence appears to be a polygenic trait, so that lowering reproduction at the low end has the same effect as increasing it at the high end.

We're also engaging in eugenic selection via abortion. To put it as tactlessly as possible, what Hitler did with defectives after they were born, we're doing with them *before* they're born.

Skupski also neglects a method suggested by Robert Heinlein in his early, "utopian" novel, *Beyond this Horizon*: gametic selection. Skupski right-ly points out that a lot of bad genes are recessive, so aborting defective embryos won't help. But Heinlein's idea was to eliminate gametes (haploid sex cells: sperm, egg) containing recessives, and make sure that only the best sperm cell and the best ovum would always meet. In other words, the genetic deck of cards would not be tampered with, but the parents would always get the best possible hand dealt.

Re Joe Partrouch's "*Rogue Moon* and Me": Larry Niven wrote a book ca. 1980 (*A World out of Time*) in which short-range matter transmission is used as a method of regaining youth. The notation of information compression during matter transmission is even older: A.E. Van Vogt's "*Delians*" (from *Mission to the Stars*, 1943) are a human subrace accidentally produced by an early and technologically imperfect form of teleportation.

Mark Leeper's review of *Batman Returns* is a howl! The funniest line (following accounts of a woman rescued by stray cats and a man raised by penguins in the sewers running for mayor) is, "After that the plot gets strange and a little hard to believe."

Like Leeper, I was struck by the fact that in *Aliens* nobody ever brings up the issue of whether it is right to exterminate a whole species, much less an intelligent alien species. That this never occurred to anyone may be a sign of how superficial is Hollywood's environmental consciousness.

*[It didn't occur to me that they would be eliminating an entire alien species in Aliens, but only those that were brought to the planet on the first alien ship (from the first film, Alien). My idea for the third film involved a visit to the parent planet of these beasts, entitled Alien Home-coming. That idea gives me chills. Of course, having someone at least say something about it in the film would have been more PC. But who in the Company is PC?]*

Jeanne Mealy, 4157 Lyndale Ave S., Minneapolis, MN 55409 USA

Larry Nowinski's "Bigfoot Pregnant" article in LL #41 was pretty strange. While it wasn't great literature, it was amusing. I don't understand why he included this line, though: "She looked physically unattractive to me, but I had talked enough with her that the appearance meant little."

*[Beats me. Larry said something about not judging intelligence, wit and charm based on appearance; it didn't quite come off like he wanted.]*

Thanks for the travelogues. I look forward to reading about exotic places with each issue of this zine. Ben Ladick's tale of traveling in Egypt was fascinating. His narrative and photos brought back some of what I learned in my college ASr History class. The article could have benefited from some editing and clarifications. For example, I'm confused as to why he regretted not being able to see the Sphinx and pyramids again.

*[I believe because of the political climate in Egypt, another trip there would be unsafe.]*

Mike Resnick's "Return to Paradise" was filled with incredible sights and sounds throughout--many of which I was happy to experience vicariously. Good lord, too, I'm tickled by his descriptions of the little things, like his wife getting stuck in the bathroom and how he scared off the lions when taking a cold shower. I'm relieved they didn't take the Lunatic Express. I believe in the theory of infinite universes that are sometimes different from each other in only one minor detail. Or not so minor, depending on whether you're aboard the Lunatic Express! I'm impressed that he got to meet James Earl Jones. What incredible ego-booster to hear that Jones is an SF fan and has read some of Mike's books! I wonder if he'd be willing to be a convention GoH? Imagine the voice of Darth Vader at a con near YOU! I was blown away by the list of birds that Carol saw. Such a variety of names. If Mike does more articles for you, would you see if he'd be willing to include a simple pronunciation guide for the foreign words he uses?

*[I can but ask, and so if Mike is willing.]*

Ben Bova made some excellent points about writing in general and how simple writing is misunderstood to be shallow and primitive. Sounds like the same errors made when people assume that it's easy to write short stories!

I began Laura Resnick's article about caving in New

York by feeling sorry for her. Dragged off in the dark of night into more and more dubious places (above ground and underground) full of surprises, yick! I am glad she eventually found things to enjoy, though I'm not clamoring to take the tour myself. Actually, I feel as though I was along--and especially appreciated her humorous comments. I hope you get more articles from her.

*[So do I. Currently I am not sure where in the world she is. Last I heard she had gone back to North Africa and was skirting dangers with bandits and wild tribesmen.]*

"Conreports and Ramblings"--WOW at all you do. I'm glad that most of your experiences were enjoyable. The green glow is from my envy at the cons you've attended. I'm glad you wrote about being in Orlando for *Magicon* and Walt Disney World. You did some of the same things we did at WDW as well as many we'd like to do. Much activity at the con, including the infamous Hugos mix-up. Let your behavior be an example to others!

What a shame about your increased sensitivity to chlorine. How does it prevent you from lifeguarding even if you're not in the water? The lifeguards I've seen at pools and beaches sit or stand on the side when on duty.

*[It's the smell of the chlorine that gets to me from the pool, as well as immersion in the water. I can stand about 20 minutes in chlorinated water before it starts affecting me right away. But I will eventually react within a couple of hours. If I am standing by the pool, I am affected within the hour. Occasionally I will put up with the effects just to swim, but not too often, because it is miserable to have your nose leaking while trying to carry on a conversation.]*

E.B. Frohvet wins the award for the weirdest (and longest) title in this issue! He/she brought together a lot of things I've thought about conventions, with specific references to the worldcon. Was Frohvet also responsible for "The Brass Pennyshistle Awards -- Orland '92"? [Yes.] Good job! I disagree that the best party decoration was the stuffed possum at the '95 in '95 party -- Roscoe himself was at the Minneapolis in '73 party!

## I ALSO HEARD FROM

Clifton Amsbury, Carl Aschmann, Allan Beatty, Ruth Berman, Gary Bernstein, Mark Bernstein, Lloyd Biggle, John Binns, Michael Bishop, Cathy Buburuz, Joseph Casey, Tom Ciesielski, Buck Coulson, Helen E. Davis, Tomislav Detelj, Jan Di Masi, Bill Donaho, Rob Duncan, Gregg & Linda Dunn, Allison Durno, Dennis Fischer, David Foster, Donald Franson, Bob & Betty Gaines, Mike Glicksahn, Lynn Gold, Joe Green, Mick Hamblen, Teddy Harvia, John Hertz, Rusty Hevelin, Geordi Howen, Ben Indick, Fred Jakobiec, Jean Jambas, Lars-Arne Karlsson, Jay Kay Klein, Kathe Kojas, Richard Kostelanetz, Jodi Krangle, Jim Landis, David Langford, Aaron Larson, Roy Lavender, Jacqueline Lichtenberg, Rick Lieder, Dr. Jane Lindsold, Mary Lou Lockhart, Sam Long, Gary Lovisi, Bill & Nancy & Deanna Lund, Dick Lynch (who sent postcards from the Soviet Union and Poland), Lynn Margosian, Eric Mayer, Michael McKenny, Jeanne Mealy, Diane Miller, Murray Moore, Douglas Morgan (who has moved from Cardiff to Canterbury), Marshall Muller, Richard Newsome, Debbie

Ridpath Ohl, Elizabeth Osborne, David Palter, Lore Ann Parent, Bruce Peltz (whose postcards from his travels around the world are wonderful), Lloyd Penney, John M. Portley, Peggy Ranson, Mary Reed, Paula Robinson, Bob Sabella, Tom Sadler, Pamela Sargent, Misha Sestak (who also has a new house), David Shea, Roger Sheppard, Pat and Roger Sims, Glenn Simser, Heather Smith, Shawn Standfast, Milton Stevens, Victor E. Swanson (who will have a short story in the next issue), Roy Tackett, Sylvus Tarn, Joan Temple, David Thayer, John Thiel, Lisa Thomas, Martin Tudor, R Lauraine Tuthasi, Julie Washington, Trance Washington, Lawrence Watt-Evans, Wayne St. Wayne (a fan who is also a wrestler!), Henry Welch, Kim White, Denis & Judy Wilemski, Taras Wolansky, delphyné joan woods, Martin Morse Wooster, Jim & Andrea Yeomans

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IS THIS THE  
YOU-GO-WINNING  
**LAN'S**  
LATRINE?



NO, THIS IS

THE HUGO-WINNING  
**LAN'S** **LANTERN**

B. WARE

100% hand-drawn  
laser-free art